

Andrew Hirsh

31 January 2022

Animated Diplomacy: Myth, Propaganda, Ideologically Balanced Cartoons, and Jewish-Arab Society through the Lens of Caricature

“Mythology is not a lie, mythology is poetry, it is metaphorical. It has been well said that mythology is the penultimate truth – penultimate because the ultimate cannot be put into words. It is beyond words. Beyond images, beyond that bounding rim of the Buddhist Wheel of Becoming. Mythology pitches the mind beyond that rim, to what can be known but not told.”

— Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*

**Abstract:** This paper presents how ideologically balanced, representational mythology can mitigate intractable conflict. I describe the history of cartoons (broadly defined to encompass caricature, editorial cartoons, comics, graphic novels, illustration, animation, and puppetry) and their ability to influence society and subvert authority. I examine meme theory, collective consciousness, and the history of ideology, mythology, and caricature. I synthesize Jewish, Middle Eastern, and North African culture, history, and religion through cartoons. Finally, I apply my *theory of change* to the Israeli/Palestinian Issue – *Olive Branch Pictures Inc*, a representational, ideologically balanced comics and animation studio for conflict mediation and edutainment.

**Keywords:** Cultural Diplomacy, Peacebuilding, Cartoon, Narrative, Mythology, Edutainment, Memetics, Semiotics, Conflict Mediation, Propaganda, Public Relations, Comics, Animation, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Israeli, Palestinian, Israel, Palestine, Arab, Jewish, Diaspora, Art

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History, Anthropology, Comparative Literature, Art History, Storytelling, Cultural Production,  
Linguistics, Hebrew, Arabic, Semitic, Middle East, Islam, Judaism, Religion, Representation,  
Social Enterprise, Social Entrepreneurship, Game Theory, International Relations

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Draft

## Introduction

Humans are the only species capable of telling stories. Storytelling allows us to form social groups beyond *Dunbar's Number* – the number of people who we can form sustainable, meaningful relationship with, approximately 150.<sup>1</sup> These mythologies, religious texts, literature, and historical narratives have formed value and behavior systems and identities across civilization.

In his book *Sapiens*, Yuval Noah Harari supports the capacity of myth to unite and civilize societies: “large numbers of strangers can cooperate successfully by believing in common myths. Any large-scale human cooperation – whether a modern state, a medieval church, an ancient city or an archaic tribe – is rooted in common myths that exist only in people's collective imagination.”<sup>2</sup>

From Scheherazade's *One Thousand and One Nights*, the Tales of the Brothers Grimm and *Harry Potter* to Greek Mythology and the sacred text of the Abrahamic, Hindu, and Buddhist dharmas, all stories serve to promote morality, create meaning, and orient society.

There is a middle ground between the secular and the religious, that such stories, such myths, can metaphorically communicate the nature and ideals of the collective humanity, developed over centuries of socialization, to the level of aggregate psychological truth or divine

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<sup>1</sup> [Dunbar, R. I. M. \(1992\). "Neocortex size as a constraint on group size in primates". \*Journal of Human Evolution\*. 22 \(6\): 469–493. doi:10.1016/0047-2484\(92\)90081-J.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Harari, Yuval N. “Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind”. *New York, New York: Harper* (2015): p. 17.

inspiration. In his work, *The Concept of the Collective Unconscious*, psychologist Carl Jung asserts that humans inherit a psychic system that manifests as archetypal thoughts and behaviors.<sup>3</sup> Where Jung reveals these unconscious archetypes in the psychoanalysis of dreams, Joseph Campbell finds evidence in the mythology of diverse civilizations, from Osiris, Prometheus, and the Buddha to Moses, Jesus, and Mohammad (peace be upon them). In his seminal work, "The Hero with A Thousand Faces", Campbell writes, "whether we listen with aloof amusement to the dreamlike mumbo jumbo of some red-eyed witch doctor of the Congo, or read with cultivated rapture thin translations from the sonnets of the mystic Lao-tse; now and again crack the hard nutshell of an argument of Aquinas, or catch suddenly the shining meaning of a bizarre Eskimo fairy tale: it will be always the one, shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story that we find, together with a challengingly persistent suggestion of more remaining to be experienced than will ever be known or told." Campbell's work directly influenced *Star Wars* and many other modern stories. Such myths and stories that embody the archetypal "Hero's Journey", or "Monomyth", inform people how to mature, overcome obstacles, win allies and mentors, know right from wrong, and find love. Campbell writes, "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder:

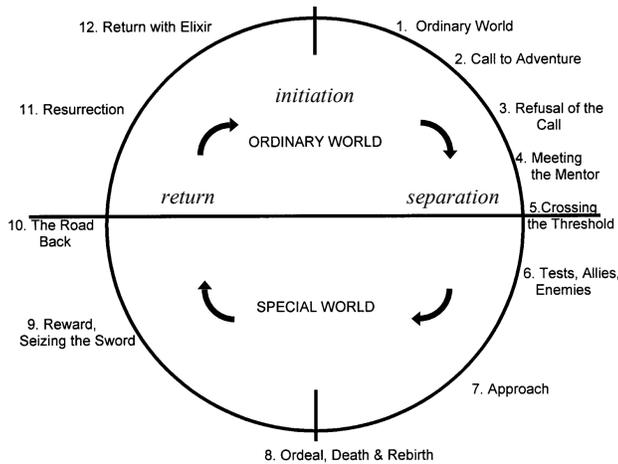
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<sup>3</sup> Jung, Carl. *The Concept of the Collective Unconscious*. London: St. Bartholomew's Hospital Journal (1937): p. 1.

fabulous forces are there encountered, and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”<sup>4</sup>

Figure 2. Joseph Campbell, The Hero’s Journey Diagram



In his 1955 work, *The Great Mother*, Erich Neumann, considered the intellectual heir of Carl Jung, theorized four fundamental stages in women’s psychological development, tracing the genealogy and symbolism of goddess figures in world culture. In the “Matriarchal” stage the ego and the unconscious are fused in psychic unity, symbolized by *uroboros*, an ancient symbol of a snake both devouring and giving birth to itself.

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, Joseph. “The Hero with a Thousand Faces”. *Princeton, New Jersey*: Princeton University Press (2004): p. 3, 28.

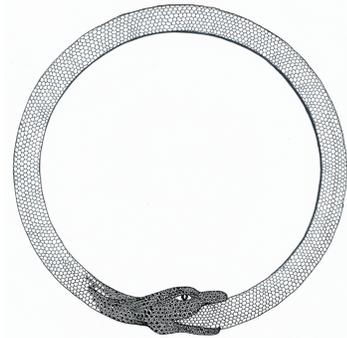
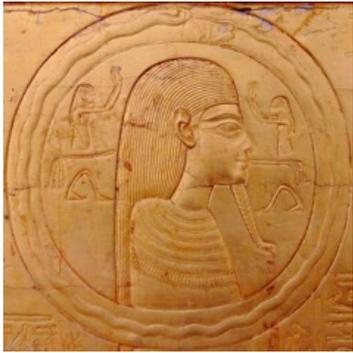


Figure 3. First known representation of the ouroboros, on a shrine enclosing the sarcophagus of Tutankhamun

In the second stage, there is spiritual invasion and domination by the Great Father archetype, which is associated with rationalism and monotheism. In the third stage, the woman embodies the masculine, a rescuing hero who liberates the young woman from the controlling father but yokes her to conventional marriage under new male authority. Sex roles are polarized, with masculinity and femininity mutually exclusive. Neumann's fourth and final stage has feminist implications: here the mature woman discovers her authentic self. As she borrows from the masculine, sex roles become blurred.<sup>5,6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Camille Paglia. "Erich Neumann: Theorist of the Great Mother". *Boston University* (2010).

<sup>6</sup> Neumann, Erich, and Ralph Manheim. *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*. Princeton University Press, 1983. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1d2dm6t](http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1d2dm6t). Accessed 2 February 2021.

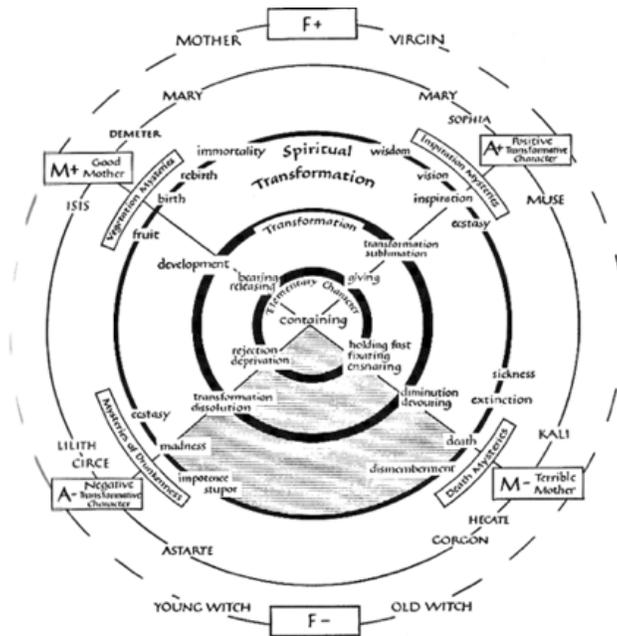


Figure 4. Diagram of Erich Neumann's conception of the female psyche

In 1990, Maureen Murdock wrote *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness* in response to Campbell's model. Murdock felt that "the hero's journey" failed to address the psycho-spiritual journey of contemporary women. She developed a model describing the cyclical nature of the female experience. Campbell's response to Murdock's model was, "Women don't need to make the journey" (...) "In the whole mythological tradition, the woman is there. All she has to do is to realize that she's the place that people are trying to get to".<sup>7</sup> According to Murdock, that may be true mythologically as the hero or heroine seeks

<sup>7</sup> Campbell, 1981.

illumination, but psychologically, the journey of the contemporary heroine involves different stages. The Heroine's Journey begins with an initial separation from feminine values, seeking recognition and success in a patriarchal culture, experiencing spiritual death, and turning inward to reclaim the power and spirit of the sacred feminine. The final stages involve an acknowledgement of the union and power of one's dual nature for the benefit of all humankind. Drawing upon cultural myths, Murdock illustrates an alternative journey model to that of patriarchal hegemony, which has become a template for novelists and screenwriters, illuminating twentieth-century feminist literature.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 5. Maureen Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey* Diagram

These theories however do not represent LGBTQ+ nor post-modern feminist psyches.

<sup>8</sup> Maureen Murdock. "The Heroine's Journey". *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* (2016).

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COMPARATIVE NARRATIVE STORY STRUCTURES		I	N	T	E	R	-	C	O	N	N	E	C	T	E	D	T	A
ARISTOTLE c.335 BC	PROLOGUE PROLOGUE Parados (Parados/Ode) MIDDLE Episodes(s) Stasimon(s) (Commentary) Episodes(s) (Commentary) Episodes(s) (Commentary) Episodes(s) (Commentary)																	
KISHOTENKETSU c.500	INTRO DEVELOPMENT TWIST END																	
GUSTAV FREYTAG c.1863	EXPOSITION INCITING INCIDENT RISE/ACTION CLIMAX FALLING ACTION RESOLUTION																	
JOSEPH CAMPBELL c.1949	SEPARATION/ DEPARTURE Call to Adventure Refusal of the Call Acceptance of Call Supernatural Aid Crossing Threshold Belly of the Whale INITIATION Road of Trials Meeting the Goddess Woman as Temptress Atonement w/ Father Apotheosis The Ultimate Boon RETURN Refusal of the Return																	
SYD FIELD c.1979	SETUP Inciting Incident Plot Point 1 CONFRONTATION Pinch 1 Midpoint Pinch 2 Plot Point 2 RESOLUTION																	
ROBERT MCKEE c.1999	INCITING INCIDENT PROGRESSIVE COMPLICATIONS CRISIS CLIMAX																	
BLAKE SNYDER c.2005	SET-UP Opening Image Theme Stated Catalyst Debate BREAK INTO TWO B Story Fun and Games Midpoint Bad Guys Close In All is Lost One Night of the Soul BREAK INTO THREE																	
DAN HARMON c.2012	YOU a character in a zone of comfort NEED something GO enter an unfamiliar situation SEARCH adapt to it END what they wanted TAKE pay its price REFLECTION																	

Additionally, they metaphorically represent archetypes and do not account for the potential for sustainable collective transformation through the generational relationship between genetic and environmental (socio-cultural) evolution.<sup>9, 10, 11, 12, 13</sup> Furthermore, these theories cannot be applied uniformly on an individual level due to genetic and environmental variance.<sup>14</sup>

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Myths have been a source of tribal unity since the dawn of civilization.<sup>15</sup> In the book, "Imagined Communities", Benedict Anderson argues that beyond geo-linguistic kinship, nations largely exist in the collective imagination of individuals. National identity is manifested in the production of myth, history, language, tradition, etc., in which the institutions of education and media play a significant role.<sup>16</sup>

Like the gene, "memes" are "units of culture" that can pass from one individual to another and multiply to form systems of values. Stories are organized clusters of memes like how clusters of organized genes can form organelles, organs, and organisms. The way that

<sup>9</sup> Henrich, J., and R. McElreath. "Dual Inheritance Theory: The Evolution of Human Cultural Capacities and Cultural Evolution." In *Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*, edited by Robin Dunbar and Louise Barrett, 555-570. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> [Peter J. Richerson](#) and [Robert Boyd](#). "Not By Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution". *University of Chicago Press* (2005).

<sup>11</sup> National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2010). *Early Experiences Can Alter Gene Expression and Affect Long-Term Development: Working Paper No. 10*.

<sup>12</sup> Ryutaro Uchiyama, Rachel Spicer, Michael Muthukrishna. "Cultural Evolution of Genetic Heritability". *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, Cambridge University* (2021).

<sup>13</sup> Wendy Wood, Alice H. Egly. "A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Behavior of Women and Men: Implications of the Origins of Sex Differences." *Psychological Bulletin, American Psychological Association* (2002).

<sup>14</sup> Lee, S.S.J., Mountain, J., Koenig, B. *et al.* The ethics of characterizing difference: guiding principles on using racial categories in human genetics. *Genome Biol* **9**, 404 (2008). <https://doi.org/10.1186/gb-2008-9-7-404>

<sup>15</sup> Peterson, Jordan. "Personality and Its Transformations: Historical & Mythological Context". *University of Toronto* (2017).

<sup>16</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso 1991) 5-10.

memes are transmitted across generations and between cultures supports Jung's concept of collective unconscious. In a perfect market of ideas, the more truth and utility they have, the more they spread and withstand the test of time.<sup>17</sup>

Stories, spread by inter-cultural osmosis or media, can be a form of cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is a form of soft power that includes the exchange of ideas, information, art, language, and other forms of culture among peoples and nations. The goals of cultural diplomacy are, through acts of good-will and humanity, to influence a foreign audience to cooperate, earn support for policies, mollify conflict, and foster understanding.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, diplomacy is often described as "war by other means".<sup>19</sup>



Figure 1. Brian Waniowski. "What's a Narrative". Harmony Labs, *Medium* (2021).

Cultural diplomacy can also be used as propaganda. Propaganda is defined as "information, ideas, opinions, or images, often only giving one part of an argument, that are

<sup>17</sup> Steven Pinker. "Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress". *Viking* (2018).

<sup>18</sup> Waller, Michael J. "Cultural Diplomacy, Political Influence, and Integrated Strategy", The Institute of World Politics Press (2009): p. 74, 88.

<sup>19</sup> James R. Holmes. "Everything You Know About Clausewitz Is Wrong: A botched translation of Clausewitz has had an enduring impact on our thinking on warfare." *The Diplomat* (2014): <https://thediplomat.com/2014/11/everything-you-know-about-clausewitz-is-wrong/> (Accessed 18 August 2021).

spread with the intention of influencing people's opinions."<sup>20</sup> In the 20th century, the term *propaganda* was often associated with a manipulative approach, but historically, propaganda has been a neutral descriptive term. In Spanish, "propaganda" simply means "advertising". A wide range of materials and media are used for conveying propaganda messages, which changed as new technologies were invented, including paintings, cartoons, posters, pamphlets, films, radio shows, TV shows, and websites. More recently, the digital age has given rise to new ways of disseminating propaganda, for example, bots and algorithms are currently being used to create computational propaganda and fake or biased news and spread it on social media.

Manipulative intent, omission of counterpoint, and selective editing generally distinguish propaganda from education. Education should be designed to teach how to think, not what to think. However, some propagandists may look upon themselves as educators, that their perspective is truth, and any effort to convince or spread that truth is for the greater good. "Education" for one person may be "propaganda" for another.

Public relations (PR) is the practice of managing and disseminating information from an individual or an organization (such as a business, government agency, or a nonprofit organization) to the public in order to affect their public perception. The field was pioneered by Edward Bernays, the "father of public relations", who believed that "Engineering consent" of

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<sup>20</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/propaganda>

the masses would be vital for the survival of democracy.<sup>21</sup> Bernays advocated for the media as an authoritative tool against authoritarianism, which is in constant conflict with the anarchy bubbling under the surface of democracy and its principal value, liberty.

As Egyptian artist Ganzeer puts it, apply [PR] to a culture and what you have is mythology. Artists have the power to shape and reshape that mythology and create new ideas about our shared identity.”<sup>22</sup>

All art and media can be viewed as a form of propaganda.<sup>23, 24</sup> The absence of overt politics in art or popular cultural production can be perceived (generally from a Marxist/socialist perspective as well as genuinely oppressed or marginalized people) as the reinforcement of the status quo or dominant ideologies though it is possible that such production could be conspiratorial media manipulation as well.<sup>25, 26</sup>

Similarly, Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci asserts in his theory of hegemony that the elite maintain status quo dominance by using ideology rather than violence, economic power, or coercion to create self-propagating structures of values and norms.

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<sup>21</sup> Edward Bernays. “Propaganda” p.11

<sup>22</sup> Ganzeer. “Bridging the Past”. *Getty Museum* (2021).

<sup>23</sup> Shaw, Sir Walter Sidney. Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929: Evidence Heard During the 1st [-47th] Sittings, HM Stationery Office, 1930.

<sup>24</sup> Sufian, Sandy. “Anatomy of the 1936–39 Revolt: Images of the Body in Political Cartoons of Mandatory Palestine”, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37, No.2 (2008).

<sup>25</sup> Ariel Dorfman. “How to Read Donald Duck”. *OR Books* (2006).

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Andrae. “Carl Banks and the Disney Comic Book: Unmasking the Myth of Modernity”. *University Press of Mississippi* (2006).

These views however contrast with the *way of god* brought by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato from oral tradition that “if wealth and poverty did not exist, there would be no opportunity for people to demonstrate either generosity or indifference. (...) That wealth exists allows the rich to be tested by [their] advantage, determine whether [they] will be generous or indifferent to the poor who need [their] help. The poor are likewise tested to determine whether or not they will be satisfied and thank God for the little that they have”.<sup>27</sup>

Egyptian rulers famously used wall paintings to construct national narratives for the public as did Italian plutocrats such as the Medici family, helping to spread Christianity through beautiful and expensive imagery.<sup>28, 29</sup>

According to Plato, art is a form of “mimesis”, meaning representation or imitation, of nature or society. This perspective shaped the general perception of Western art for centuries as the reflection of what is beautiful and/or meaningful.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, modern art emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in rejection of realism, giving way to forms like abstract art and parody.<sup>31</sup>

Everyone is biased; limited in our perception. The intentions and identity of the creator matters but perhaps what matters most is its reception.<sup>32, 33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Moshe Chaim Luzzatto. “*Derech Hashem: The Way of God*”. *Feldheim Publishers* (1998).

<sup>28</sup> Ronald J. Leprohon. “[A Companion to Ancient Egyptian Art](#)”. *Wiley Online Library* (2014): <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118325070.ch16>

<sup>29</sup> [https://documents.sessions.edu/eforms/courseware/coursedocuments/history\\_of\\_art/lesson6.html](https://documents.sessions.edu/eforms/courseware/coursedocuments/history_of_art/lesson6.html)

<sup>30</sup> Paul Fry. “Introduction to the Theory of Literature: The Idea of the Autonomous Artwork”. *YaleCourse* (2009): 8:00

<sup>31</sup> Childs, Peter. “*Modernism*” *Routledge* (2000).

<sup>32</sup> Wimsatt, W. K.; Beardsley, M. C. “The Intentional Fallacy”. *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*, *University Press of Kentucky* (1954).

<sup>33</sup> Roland Barthes. “The Death of the Author”. *Aspen* (1967).

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Ideology, systems of ideas and ideals applied to society can be divided into the real and the idea, what is and what ought to be. The ideal can then be divided into the positive and the negative, praise and criticism. Breaking it down further we understand ideology as: 1. Interpretation – a means of understanding the world. 2. Integration – a means of reinforcing cohesion and identity. 3. Domination – a means of maintaining control by elites through manipulation. 4. Legitimization – a means of legitimizing authority and a specific social order. 5. Normative Logic – a contextual set of rules, guidelines and norms that facilitate and prescribe action based on individual and group experience. 6. Social Theory – in which perception of reality is determined through open discourse and rationality. 7. Fantasy Structuring Social Reality – in which no experience of social reality can exist outside of ideology.<sup>34, 35</sup> And then of course there's religion which could be represent any or all these forms of ideology and can be described essentially as mythological objectivism.

In *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), Anthropologist Clifford Geertz described culture as a system of inherited concepts expressed through signs and symbols by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their perception of reality.<sup>36</sup> To Geertz, in addition to recorded and oral tradition and expression, it is the role of the anthropologist to interpret cultures through semiotics.

<sup>34</sup> Seeck, Hannele & Sturdy, Andrew & Boncori, Anne-Laure & Fougère, Martin. (2019). Ideology in Management Studies. *International Journal of Management Reviews*. 22. DOI: 10.1111/ijmr.12215 (Accessed 15 July 2021).

<sup>35</sup> Gerring, John. "Ideology: A Definitional Analysis." *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 4, 1997, pp. 957–994. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/448995. Accessed 16 July 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Clifford Geertz. "The Interpretation of Cultures". New York: *Basic Books* (1973): p. 89.

Commented [8]: Maybe simplify this into the three main understandings of ideology: Interpretation, Integration, and Legitimization

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Semiotics is the study of signs – sounds, objects, qualities, acts, events, images, and words, and how they indicate meaning in society through metaphor (symbols) and simile (icons)<sup>37</sup> even individual letters.<sup>38, 39, 40</sup>

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Figure 4. Icon



Figure 4. Symbol

Ancient Semitic/Hebrew						Modern Hebrew			Greek		Latin	
Early	Middle	Late	Name	Picture	Meaning	Sound	Letter	Name	Sound	Alphabet	Modern	
א	𐤀	א	Al	On head	Strong, Power, Leader	ah, ah	א	Alaph	[ident]	Α	Α	A
ב	𐤁	ב	Bet	Teat (Borgyian)	Family, House, In	b, bby)	ב	Bayt	(b, bby)	Β	Β	B
ג	𐤂	ג	Gan	Foot	Gather, Walk	g	ג	Ganal	g	Γ	Γ	C G
ד	𐤃	ד	Dal	Door	More, Hang, Entrance	d	ד	Dalat	d	Δ	Δ	D
ה	𐤄	ה	Hay	Man with arms raised	Look, Reveal, Breath	h, ah	ה	Hay	h	Ε	Ε	E
ו	𐤅	ו	Waw	Teat peg	Add, Secure, Hook	w, o, u	ו	Vav	v	Ϝ	Ϝ	F
ז	𐤆	ז	Zan	Meatloaf	Food, Cut, Nourish	z	ז	Zarin	z	Ζ	Ζ	Z
ח	𐤇	ח	Chet	Teat wall	Wall, Outside, Deride, Hat	hh	ח	Chet	hh	Η	Η	H
ט	𐤈	ט	Tet	Basket	Surround, Contain, Shut	t	ט	Tet	t	Θ	Θ	
י	𐤉	י	Yad	Arm and closed hand	Hand, Work, Throw, Worship	y, ee	י	Yad	y	Ι	Ι	I J
כ	𐤊	כ	Kaph	Open palm	Hand, Open, Allow, Tame	k, kh	כ	Kaph	k, kh	Κ	Κ	K
ל	𐤋	ל	Lam	Shepherd staff	Teach, Yoke, Authority, Band	l	ל	Lamet	l	Λ	Λ	L
מ	𐤌	מ	Mem	Water	Water, Chaos, Mighty, Blood	m	מ	Mem	m	Μ	Μ	M
נ	𐤍	נ	Nun	Seed	Seed, Continue, Heir, Son	n	נ	Nun	n	Ν	Ν	N
ס	𐤎	ס	Sin	Thorn	Grab, Hate, Protect	s	ס	Samech	s	Ξ	Ξ	X
ע	𐤏	ע	Ain	Eye	See, Watch, Know, Shade	[ident]	ע	Ayin	[ident]	Ο	Ο	O
פ	𐤏	פ	Phah	Slope	Event, Dark, Wicked	ph	פ	Fay	(p, phfi)	Π	Π	P
צ	𐤐	צ	Cy	Idoloth	Open, Blow, Scatter, Edge	(p, phfi)	צ	Cy	(p, phfi)	Π	Π	P
ק	𐤑	ק	Qad	Trail	Trail, Journey, Chase, Hunt	ts	ק	Qade	ts	Μ		
ר	𐤒	ר	Ray	Sun on the horizon	Condense, Circle, Rise	q	ר	Ray	q	Q	Q	Q
ש	𐤓	ש	Shah	Head of a man	Head, First, Top, Beginning	s	ש	Shah	s	Ρ	Ρ	R
ת	𐤔	ת	Tah	Two front teeth	Sharp, Press, Eat, Two	sh	ת	Tah	sh, s	Σ	Σ	S
י	𐤕	י	Tav	Crossed sticks	Mark, Sign, Signal, Monument	t	ת	Tav	t	Τ	Τ	T

<https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/alphabet/files/alphabetchart.gif>

In his book *Mythologies* (1957), Barthes asserts that none of our ideas, our very language, are our own. He argues that mythology isn't something from the past but a constant

<sup>37</sup> Daniel Chandler. "Semiotics for Beginners". Princeton University: <https://www.cs.princeton.edu/~chazelle/courses/BIB/semio2.htm> (Accessed 26 May 2021)

<sup>38</sup> Yosef Gikatillah. "Shaarei Orach". Composed: Spain, 1260 - c.1300 CE. Sefaria: [https://www.sefaria.org/Shaaarei\\_Orah](https://www.sefaria.org/Shaaarei_Orah)

<sup>39</sup> Nadjm oud-Dine Bammate. "The Symbolism of Arabic Letters". Joseph Schaffer (2004): <https://josephschaffer.wordpress.com/2018/07/20/the-symbolism-of-arabic-letters-by-nadjm-our-dine-bammate-french-to-english-translation/>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.walkingkabbalah.com/hebrew-alphabet-letter-meanings/>

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and necessary function of communication, which allows society to function by aligning our individual perspectives into collective social parameters.<sup>41, 42</sup>

In “Manufacturing Consent”, Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman argue that news outlets cover events in ways that favor the [competing] ideologies of controlling, shareholding elites and that due to revenue incentives, news outlets focus on stories that sell.

Today, the internet and social media has democratized media production and distribution, fragmenting the influence of the establishment media elite.

The question is, to what extent does the media we consume reflect, construct, criticize, and mythologize reality?

In fact, the word “media” is the plural of the Latin word “medium”, literally meaning “middle ground” or “intermediate” thus media also simply implies a form of communication. Its modern usage as a word to describe newspapers, radio and other sources of information likely derives from the term 'mass media' which was a technical term used in the advertising industry from the 1920s on.<sup>43</sup>

Aristotle’s *Poetics* describes the ability of art, and stories specifically, to achieve catharsis of emotional tension for the audience. In the Arab world, particularly Egypt and the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine), before the arrival of theatre and TV, “*Hakawatis*” – “storytellers” – were a major source of entertainment. People would gather in coffee shops,

<sup>41</sup> Roland Barthes. “Mythology”. New York: Noonday Press (1972).

<sup>42</sup> Roland Barthes. “Elements of semiology” (trans. Annette Lavers & Colin Smith). London: Jonathan Cape (1964).

<sup>43</sup> MacMillian Dictionary: “Word of the Day: Media. *Macmillan Dictionary Blog*: <https://www.macmillandictionaryblog.com/media> (Accessed 10 August 2021).

Commented [12]: Maybe try to define narrative and how we see inevitably the world through narrative:

In 1991, Bruner published an article in *Critical Inquiry* entitled “The Narrative Construction of Reality.” In this article, he argued that the mind structures its sense of reality through mediation through “cultural products, like language and other symbolic systems” (3). He specifically focuses on the idea of narrative as one of these cultural products. He defines narrative in terms of ten things:

Narrative diachronicity: The notion that narratives take place over some sense of time.

Particularity: The idea that narratives deal with particular events, although some events may be left vague and general.

Intentional state entailment: The concept that characters within a narrative have “beliefs, desires, theories, values, and so on” (7).

Hermeneutic compossibility: The theory that narratives are that which can be interpreted in terms of their role as a selected series of events that constitute a “story.”

See also Hermeneutics

Canonicity and breach: The claim that stories are about something unusual happening that “breaches” the canonical (i.e. normal) state.

Referentiality: The principle that a story in some way references reality, although not in a direct way that offers verisimilitude.

Genericness: The flipside to particularity, this is the characteristic of narrative whereby the story can be classified as a genre.

Normativeness: The observation that narrative in some way supposes a claim about how one ought to act. This follows from canonicity and breach.

Context sensitivity and negotiability: Related to hermeneutic compossibility, this is the characteristic whereby narrative requires a negotiated role between author or text and reader, including the assigning of a context to the narrative, and ideas like suspension of disbelief.

Narrative accrual: Finally, the idea that stories are cumulative, that is, that new stories follow from older ones.

Bruner observes that these ten characteristics at once describe narrative and the reality constructed and posited by narrative, which in turn teaches us about the nature of reality as constructed by the human mind via narrative

homes or public spaces to listen as the *Hakawati* would narrate stories of heroism, action or romance in the form of tragedies and comedies containing all sorts of events and characters, fictional or real, often spontaneous, sometimes pre-conceived, and always with a moral or lesson in the end.<sup>44</sup> If an issue arose in the community, a *Hakawati* might embed relevant solutions to the real-life conflict within the story.<sup>45</sup>

Commented [13]: Maybe different photo, this maybe not be a Hakawati



Figure 6. Drawing of a literary cafe in Cairo early 1900s by Ihap Hulusi Görey

Similar is the Jewish tradition of the *Maggid*, literally “Teller” in Hebrew, the storytellers who would spin fantastic fables to teach Torah wisdom. Among the greatest Jewish *Maggids* of all time, the Dubner *Maggid*, (Rabbi Yaakov Krantz, d. 1804). When asked: “*Why do we have two Torah celebrations* both Simchas Torah (the completion of the annual Torah cycle) and

<sup>44</sup> Dima al-Sharif. Al-Hakawati الحكاوي – The Storyteller Tradition”. *Dimasharif.com* (2013).

<sup>45</sup> “Death of the storyteller, birth of the theater: The dramatic arts in Palestine, 1900 to 1948”. *Paljourneys*. <https://www.paljourneys.org/en/story/9561/death-storyteller-birth-theater>

Shavuot (commemorating the revelation of the Torah at Mt. Sinai)? Why not condense them into one grand Holiday? Characteristically – he responded with a story:

“A childless King and Queen were desperate. After many years, they visited a sage – who conveyed a potent blessing with a cautionary clause. Shortly, the Queen would successfully bear a baby girl. No man outside the family may see her until her wedding day, lest she die. And so it was. Upon the Queen’s birth of a baby girl, a secluded island was prepared for the Princess – where she was raised in regal style with the finest array of female educators and advisers.

As the Princess came of age, the King encountered a serious technical difficulty in marrying off his daughter. Each nobleman in the King’s court was thrilled to accept the princess’s hand in marriage – until it was explained that the first date and the wedding would coincide. On the verge of despair, the King approached the final nobleman – who remarkably assented to marry without even a peek.

As the wedding approached, our heroic nobleman began to experience buyer’s remorse as his repressed bridal fears shook him profoundly. For better, but probably for worse, he was stuck. On that wedding day, the whole world came to dance, except for the anxiety-stricken groom. As he peered underneath the veil, bracing for disaster, but inexplicably the princess was incredibly beautiful. A nagging nervousness persisted: “What’s the catch?” What of her personality? A woman marooned on an island her whole life? But none came. Every day she

revealed yet another wondrous aspect of her personality. Not only was she stunning, she was also spunky, spirited, charming and deep.

Months later, the nobleman approached his new father-in-law, unabashedly admitting his delight in his bride, with but one disappointment; he had essentially missed out on the wedding. The King decided that a new party would be arranged. All the guests would be invited back but this time only one person, the prince himself, would dance to express his absolute delight. And so it was.

Shavuos, explained the Dubner Maggid marks the Jew's unshakable commitment to God's wisdom and His Torah. Not knowing what was in the Torah, at Mt. Sinai, we proclaimed *Na'aseh V'nishma* (We will perform the mitzvot and then we will understand them). That faith remained blind until the Jew was exposed to the sweetness of the Torah. Simchas Torah celebrates, through dedication to Torah Study, the Jew's joy and appreciation for the Torah."<sup>46</sup>

The nature of stories induces the audience to empathize and identify with the protagonist. In *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud explains the ability of cartoons to foster empathy. McCloud posits that the simplicity of cartoons allows viewers to identify with the characters as symbols, and, when juxtaposed with realistic backgrounds, to place that identification within their framework of reality.<sup>47</sup> These effects allow the audience to accept the

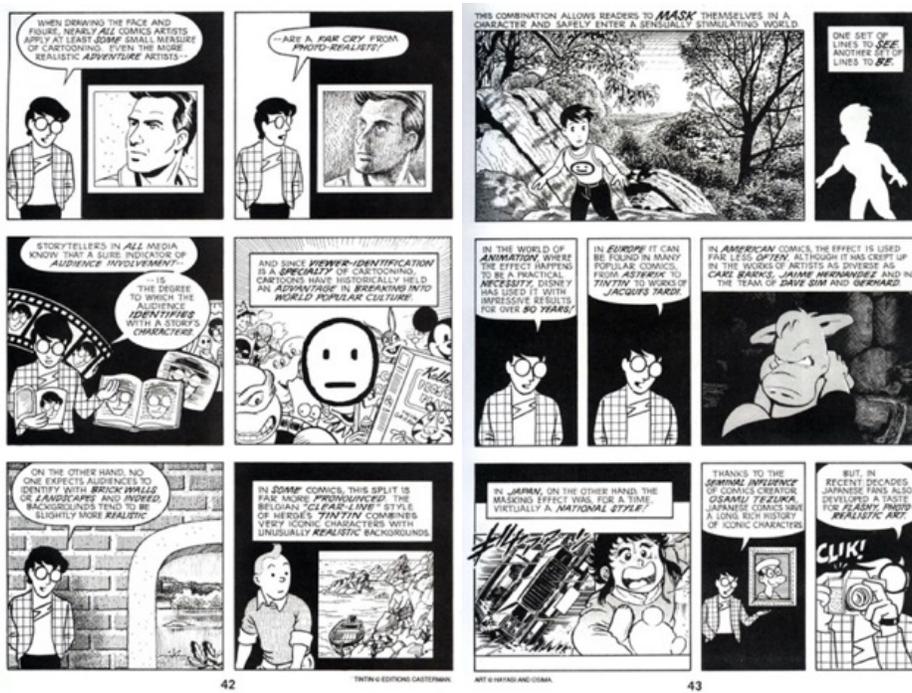
Commented [AH14]: Can I find Islamic and Christian Stories to complement this one?

<sup>46</sup> [Rabbi Asher Brander](https://www.ou.org/life/inspiration/brander_simchas_torah_5769_secret_eternity/). "Simchas Torah: The Secret of Our Eternity." *Othodox Union* (2008): [https://www.ou.org/life/inspiration/brander\\_simchas\\_torah\\_5769\\_secret\\_eternity/](https://www.ou.org/life/inspiration/brander_simchas_torah_5769_secret_eternity/)

<sup>47</sup> McCloud, Scott. "Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art." *Northampton, Massachusetts*: Tundra Publishing (1993): Ch. 2, p. 42-43.

reality of the characters, as part of the “suspension of disbelief” embodied in all forms of fictional storytelling, and thus absorb the story’s meaning.

Stories can induce the audience to transform into the protagonist on a neurological level.<sup>48</sup> Neurons react both when an action is performed and when it is observed, i.e. the sensation of eating chocolate when we observe others eating chocolate. These “mirror



"Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art." Copyright © Scott McCloud.

<sup>48</sup> Keyzers, Christian. "The Empathic Brain". Social Brain Press (2011).

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neurons” help explain why audiences adopt the same sensations felt by the character whose perspective is presented.<sup>49</sup>

### The Influence of Cartoons

Cartoons often reveal undercurrent trends unconsciously molding society’s beliefs, values, desires, political inclinations, and private, intimate thoughts.<sup>50</sup> The freedom of the pen enables a single image to capture ideas that would require a thousand words to express and can be spread and understood with ease.

The first use of political comic strips started in the 1700s in satirical magazines in Europe and spread to common use. Benjamin Franklin’s 1754 editorial cartoon, “Join, or Die”, among the earliest and most influential political cartoons in history, became a symbol of colonial freedom during the American Revolutionary War.<sup>51</sup>



Benjamin Franklin’s editorial cartoon, “Join, or Die”, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 9, 1754.

Rodolphe Töpffer is considered the father of the modern comic strip with *Histoire de Monsieur Jabot* in 1831. Growing popularity of Comic Strips led to 10 cent Pulp Magazines in 1896, featuring stories from adventure series to soap opera novelas. The 1930s saw a boom in

<sup>49</sup> Holland, Norman. “Stories and the Mirror Inside You”. *Psychology Today* (2011).

<sup>50</sup> Blich, Ben Baruch. “Israelis in the eyes of Comics.” *Jerusalem, Israel: Academy of Arts and Design* (2013).

<sup>51</sup> Margolin, Victor. “Rebellion, Reform, and Revolution: American Graphic Design for Social Change”. *Design Issues* (1988): Vol. 5, No. 1.

the growth of comics from the US, Britain, France, Italy and Japan and their influence grew to circle the globe.<sup>52</sup>



Rodolphe Töpffer's *Histoire de Monsieur Jabot*, 1831

The French referred to comics as “*bandes dessinées*” meaning “drawn strips”, which contains no indication of subject matter, unlike “comics” and “funnies”, which imply a humorous art form and have pioneered comics as the “ninth art” (*le neuvième art*) since the 1960s.<sup>53</sup>

Stereotypes – “a conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image” – are a type of symbol used by cartoonists.<sup>54</sup> Cartoonists use stereotypes as part of a visual shorthand to communicate complicated ideas quickly and effectively. Like how a light bulb above a character’s head signifies an inspiration, stereotypes efficiently signify the appearance and behavior of social groups. Cartoon art depicting racial and ethnic characteristics may be based on overserved, reported, or rumored physical characteristics and behaviors that may have a kernel of legitimacy in real physical traits or actual ritual. Caricature itself is the art of exaggeration. This trace of reality makes negative stereotypes particularly

Commented [15]: Could add how Hergé pioneered the artform and captured French identity through Asterix and Tintin.

<sup>52</sup> The Arab Comix Project: Arab and Arab-Diaspora Graphic Fiction. *Humboldt State University (2019)*.

<sup>53</sup> Claude Beylie. “La bande dessinée est-elle un art?” *Lettres et Médecins*, literary supplement *La Vie médicale* (March 1964).

<sup>54</sup> The American Heritage Dictionary (4th ed. 2000).

effective and difficult to combat, since they appear to be accurate in the opinion of those who hold them. “American cartoonists used racial and ethnic stereotypes as soon as large numbers of non-Anglo-Saxon Protestants began arriving in America in the 1840s. First to be lampooned were the Irish; then, as the abolitionist movement progressed, African Americans; next came the Jews, Germans, and Chinese; and finally, by the turn of the century, the Italians.”<sup>55</sup> In a sense, all fictional characters are stereotypes because a single character cannot possibly capture the variability of individuals within a group identity.

The history of animation begins with the flickering light from fire on paleolithic cave painting.<sup>56, 57, 58</sup> This invokes Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave”.

Draft

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<sup>55</sup> “Stereotypes in Cartoons”. *History of Teaching Institute: Ohio State University*: <https://hti.osu.edu/opper/stereotypes>

<sup>56</sup> Thomas, Bob (1958). *Walt Disney, the Art of Animation: The Story of the Disney Studio Contribution to a New Art*. *Walt Disney Studios*. Simon and Schuster.

<sup>57</sup> Azéma, Marc (September 2, 2015). *La Préhistoire du cinéma: Origines paléolithiques de la narration graphique et du cinématographe*. Éd. errance. ISBN 978287725576 – via Google Books.

<sup>58</sup> Zorich, Zach (March 27, 2014). *“Early Humans Made Animated Art”*. Nautilus.



Figure 10. "Allegory of The Cave" © Churchill Films 1973

*The Allegory of the Cave* represents Plato's beliefs that the world revealed by our senses is not the real world but only a poor copy of it, and that the real world can only be attained intellectually; his idea that knowledge cannot be transferred from teacher to student, but rather that education consists in directing student's minds toward what is real and important and allowing them to apprehend it for themselves; his faith that the universe ultimately is good;

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his conviction that enlightened individuals have an obligation to the rest of society, and that a good society must be one in which the truly wise (the Philosopher-King) are the rulers.

In it, the cave represents our physical reality as well as ignorance, as those in the cave accept what they see at face value. Ignorance is further represented by the darkness that engulfs them because they cannot know the true objects that form the shadows, leading them to believe the shadows are the true forms of the objects. The chains that prevent the prisoners from leaving the cave represent that they are trapped in ignorance, as the chains are stopping them from learning the truth. The shadows cast on the walls of the cave represent the superficial truth, which is the illusion that the prisoners see in the cave. The freed prisoner represents those who understand that the physical world is only a shadow of the truth, and the sun that is glaring the eyes of the prisoners represents the higher truth of ideas. The light further represents wisdom, as even the paltry light that makes it into the cave allows the prisoners to know shapes.<sup>59</sup>

The freed prisoner might either join the ranks of the puppeteers to communicate “the truth” in a way the prisoners understand, risk his life to drag the prisoners outside against their will, try to overthrow the system by extinguishing the fire or removing the other puppeteers, or return outside to live out his life, etc.

In contrast to the philosophy of communicating reality in the allegory of the cave, the religious perspective asserts that its teachings, its texts, offer the most approximate way of

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<sup>59</sup> Cohen, S Marc (2006). ["The Allegory of the Cave"](#). washington.edu. Retrieved 6 May 2020.

communicating reality. Rabbi Akiva Tatz paints a similar picture to the Plato's allegory replacing the light source with God, the shadow-casters as the Torah scroll – the film through which the light is projected, and instead of the shadows on the wall, and the world itself is a projection of the word of God, down to the very letter in the Kabbalistic tradition – "God spoke and it was so".<sup>60, 61, 62</sup>

Modern animation can trace its origins to puppetry as a nascent form of 2D and 3D animation. Shadow puppetry emerged in India in the first millennium BCE and spread across Asia and the Middle East between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century, developing traditions that are still practiced today especially in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, China, India, Turkey, and Greece.<sup>63, 64</sup>

Shadow puppet theater likely came into vogue in the Ottoman Empire after the Mongol invasions in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. After the Mongols took over Baghdad in 1258, and at the beginning of the so-called "decadent epoch", Iraqi doctor and poet Shams Eddine Mohammed Ibn Daniel el-Moussili (1238-1310), settled in Cairo and wrote the three oldest preserved Arabic scripts of the shadow theatre tradition. The first play, "*Tayf elKkhayal*" ("The Shadow Spirit"), a farce filled with provocative irreverence. Emir Wissal requests the assistance of a matchmaker

<sup>60</sup> Psalm 33:9

<sup>61</sup> Rabbi Akiva Tatz. "Kabbalistic Insights into the Secret Blueprint of Reality". Published 17 May 2020: <https://akivatatz.com/kabbalistic-insights-into-the-secret-blueprint-of-reality/> (Accessed 17 August 2021).

<sup>62</sup> Akiva Tatz. "Worldmask". *Targum Press in conjunction with Mishnas Rishonim* (1995).

<sup>63</sup> Orr, Inge C. "Puppet Theatre in Asia". *Asian Folklore Studies*. Nanzan University (1974): pp. 69–84.

<sup>64</sup> AND, Metin. *Karagoz – Turkish Shadow Theater*. Ahmet Rasim Çankaya. Ankara 1975.

**Commented [16]:** Is there a similar Islamic source on this?

**Commented [17]:** Add The history of animation begins with the flickering light from fire on cave drawings. Then Plato's allegory of the Cave". Imprisonment in the cave[edit] Plato begins by having

Socrates ask Glaucon to imagine a cave where people have been imprisoned from childhood, but not from birth. These prisoners are chained so that their legs and necks are fixed, forcing them to gaze at the wall in front of them and not to look around at the cave, each other, or themselves (514a–b).[2] Behind the prisoners is a fire, and between the fire and the prisoners is a raised walkway with a low wall, behind which people walk carrying objects or puppets "of men and other living things" (514b).[2]The people walk behind the wall so their bodies do not cast shadows for the prisoners to see, but the objects they carry do ("just as puppet showmen have screens in front of them at which they work their puppets" (514a)[2]). The prisoners cannot see any of what is happening behind them, they are only able to see the shadows cast upon the cave wall in front of them. The sounds of the people talking echo off the walls, and the prisoners believe these sounds come from the shadows (514c).[2] Socrates suggests that the shadows are reality for the prisoners because they have never seen anything else; they do not realize that what they see are shadows of objects in front of a fire, much less that these objects are inspired by real things outside the cave which they do not see (514b–515a).[2] The fire, or human-made light, and the puppets, used to make shadows, are done by the artists. Plato, however, indicates that the fire is also the political doctrine that is taught in a nation state. The artists use light and shadows to teach the dominant doctrines of a time and place. Also, few humans will ever escape the cave. This is not some easy task, and only a true philosopher, with decades of preparation, would be able to leave the cave, up the steep incline. Most humans will live at the bottom of the cave, and a small few will be the major artists that project the shadows with the use of human-made light. Departure from the cave[edit] ... [1]

**Commented [18]:** Maybe somewhere add that live-action is also a form of puppetry in that actors are willingly controlled by writers, directors, and producers to express messages to the audience but for the sake of this paper, there is not enough time to include the history of the influence of live-action specifically as it applies to the Israeli, Jewish, Palestinian, and Arab worlds.

to find himself a wife. On the day of the wedding, he lifts the veil of his future wife and discovers that she is extremely ugly. This is followed by the death of the matchmaker and the emir's repentance that takes him to Mecca to gain forgiveness for his sins. The story addresses with the country's political situation. Ibn Daniel seems to praise the laws adopted by Sultan Zaher Bibars against debauchery but really rails against the Mamluk Sultanate, mocking its reforms.<sup>65</sup>

The second play, "*Ajib wa Qharib*" ("Strange and Bizarre"), is a drama which depicts the life of circus performers of the Egyptian souks during the Mamluk period.<sup>66</sup>

The third play, "*El Moutayyam*" ("The Lovelorn") a romance uninhibited by the mores of its time about a bashful lover who'll do anything to satisfy his beloved. The play ends with a big party where each guest relates personal experiences and erotic pleasures, when suddenly the King of Death appears to take the lover who begs for mercy and asks to travel to Mecca to repent his sins.<sup>67</sup>

Historian Ibn Ayass, narrates in his work, *Badai' az Zouhour*, that Sultan Selim watched a shadow play depicting the assassination of the deposed Mamluk Sultan at the Rawda Palace in

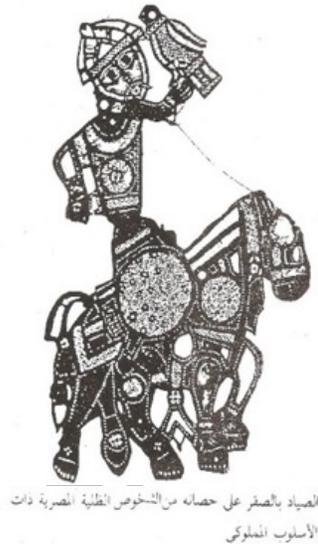
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<sup>65</sup> [Karim Dakroub](#) (author), [Anne Nguyen](#) (translator) (2009) *Puppetring* (2013): <http://www.puppetring.com/2013/12/19/arabic-shadow-theater-by-karim-dakroub/>

<sup>66</sup> [Karim Dakroub](#) (author), [Anne Nguyen](#) (translator) (2009) *Puppetring* (2013): <http://www.puppetring.com/2013/12/19/arabic-shadow-theater-by-karim-dakroub/>

<sup>67</sup> [Karim Dakroub](#) (author), [Anne Nguyen](#) (translator) (2009) *Puppetring* (2013): <http://www.puppetring.com/2013/12/19/arabic-shadow-theater-by-karim-dakroub/>

Bahrain. After the performance, Sultan Selim told the puppeteer: “when we go to Istanbul, you shall come with us so my son can watch and enjoy your show”.<sup>68</sup>



After Salah ad-Din al Ayyubi topped down the Fatimids in Egypt in 1171, he attended a shadow play with his vizier Al Qadi Al Fadhel. At the time, banning Shadow Theater was being considered for religious reasons. After the show, the king asked Al Qadi what he thought. The vizier replied, “I saw a great preach, I saw states falling and others rising”.<sup>69</sup>

*In the 11<sup>th</sup> century* Sunni Jurist and Poet of Andalusia, Ibn Hazm, (994-1064) likened life to a shadow play, on account of its temporality.<sup>70</sup> Philosopher, Lecturer, and Theologian Abu

<sup>68</sup> Ibn Ayass, *Badai' az Zouhour*, the vents of 923 H., (vol. 3 p. 125 of the Arabic edition).

<sup>69</sup> Alau'ddin Ghazouli, *Matali al Boudour wa Manazil as Sourour* (vol. 1 p. 78 of the Arabic edition).

<sup>70</sup> Ibn Hazm, *Al Akhlaq wa Assiyar*, (Arabic edition p. 14).

Hamid Al Ghazali (1059-1111) famously illustrated Aristotle's concept of the "Prime Mover" or "Uncaused Cause" referring to the origination of the universe, by using the example of a puppet master working behind the screen.<sup>71, 72, 73</sup>

Commented [19]: Ghazali quote about Shadow puppets?

The oldest indication of shadow theater in the Arab World goes back to Imam Shafi'i (Gaza 767-820) in a poem cited by Mohammad Khalil Al Moradi (1871): "This world for me is a shadow play moved by The Merciful Lord" (أرى هذا الوجود خيال ظل محركه هو الرب الغفور).<sup>74</sup>



أسرى من لعب المنار من الشخصوس الظلية ذات الأسلوب المملوكى

<sup>71</sup> Li Guo. "Arabic Shadow Theatre 1300-1900: A Handbook". Brill (2020).

<sup>72</sup> Al Ghazali, Ihya' Ulum ad Din (vol. 4 p. 122 of the Arabic edition).

<sup>73</sup> Abu al Alaa al Maarri, Al Louzoumiyyat aw Louzoum ma la Yalzom, (p. 104 of the Arabic edition).

<sup>74</sup> Al Muradi, Silk ad Durar (vol. 1 p. 132 of the Arabic edition).

### The religious dimension

During the Fatimid rule, the caliph allowed all forms of art to develop and prosper. This led to the reappearance of old traditions in the conquered states, notably Egypt, like the traditions of deriving spiritual value from media such as Shadow Puppetry (a characteristic of the original shadow art of East Asia).<sup>75</sup>

The puppet represents this philosophy of faith in which all creatures are puppets in hands of the Mighty Creator. The puppets of the shadow theater are a symbolic reflection of whom they represent without being a traditional direct personification of the created human appearance as personification is prohibited as the artist might be in doubt that he is able to insufflate a soul in it. Metin And says that the deformation of the characters in shadow theater is related to the prohibition on aniconism.<sup>76</sup> For these reasons, maybe, Shadow Theater was more accepted than other artistic forms such as painting and acting since it didn't rely on depicting all the human body directly but through deformed shadow reflection.



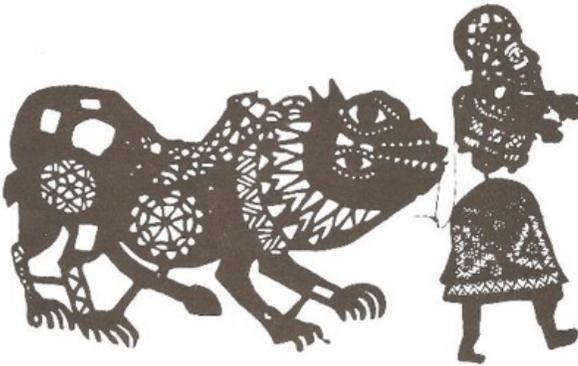
جمل وجمال، من الشخصيات التي عثر عليها كانه لعلها من شخص لعبة الحجية

<sup>75</sup> Saad Saleh: Traditions of popular comedy. Ministry of Culture, Cairo 1994. P 80.

<sup>76</sup> Saad, Farouk: *Khayal Al Zill Al Arabi* (the Arab Shadow Theater). Ed. Charikat Al Matbouaat, Beyrouth 1993. p. 201.

Commented [20]: Maybe somewhere add the barriers of living representation have been broken (maybe example the death of the Saudi prince resulting from a feud after the creation of one of the first broadcasting service?)

In Sufism and other mysticism such as Suhrawardi, light and shadow are an abstract representation of two opposite worlds, the spiritual world facing the real concrete world.<sup>77</sup> Light and darkness are therefore two symbols: a symbol of happiness in the spiritual realm and a symbol of misery in the “evanescent” world.<sup>78</sup>



الروض والأسد، من الشخصيات التي اكتشفها كماله في مصر، لعلها من شخصيات بآية عجيبة وغريب

These ideas influenced historical conditions during which Shadow Theater entered the Islamic world, when Sufis movements and ideas were on the rise in times of gloomy social and political conditions.

<sup>77</sup> Hussein Mroueh, *An Nazaat al Madiyya fi al Falsafa al Arabiya al Islamiyya*.

<sup>78</sup> Saad Saleh: *Traditions of popular comedy*. Ministry of Culture, Cairo 1994., p. 78

Most of the shadow puppet plays in Egypt during the Mamluk period have the traditional ending: the repentance of the characters and their pilgrimage to Mecca to do Hajj and ask for forgiveness.

#### **The artistic styles of the puppets:**

Arabic shadow theater can be classified into four styles: The Mamluk style, the Ottoman representative style, the Arabic popular drawing style and, the primitive style.

#### **The Ottoman style:**

According to the Turkish scholar "Metin And", shadow theater moved to Turkey from Egypt in the 16<sup>th</sup> century after Sultan Selim 1<sup>st</sup> conquered Egypt in 1517 and then evolved to the modern form known as "Karagöz" (meaning "blackeye" in Turkish).<sup>79, 80</sup>

Two legends explain the origins of Karagöz. The first tells that in 8th century Kufa (Modern Iraq), a Jew by the name of Batruni put up a shadow show imitating of the Arabian king Qail. The shadow show was condemned as sorcery and was Batruni put to death. The second legend has it that Karagoz and Hacivat were two quarrelling workmen in the Ottoman times, engaged in building a mosque or a in the city of Busra. Their constant bickering was so amusing that other workers would stop to listen. These delays made the sultan lose his temper. He ordered the execution of Karagöz and Hacivat. However, soon after their execution, along with the other workmen, the sultan was overcome with regret. A Sufi courtier called Shiek

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<sup>79</sup> Martin Banham. *The Cambridge Paperback Guide to Theatre*. Cambridge University Press (1996): pp. 241–242.

<sup>80</sup> Karim Dakroub. "Arabic Shadow Theater". *Puppetring* (2013): <http://www.puppetring.com/2013/12/19/arabic-shadow-theater-by-karim-dakroub/>

Kushteri, came to provide comfort resurrected Karagoz and Hacivat using his turban to create a curtain and his shoes to form the shadow puppet impressions of Karagoz and Hacivat.<sup>81</sup>

Karagöz represents the illiterate but straightforward public, whereas Hacivat belongs to the educated class, speaking Ottoman Turkish and using a poetical and literary language. Though Karagöz always outdoes Hacivat's superior education with his "native wit," he is also impulsive, and his never-ending deluge of get-rich-quick schemes always results in failure.

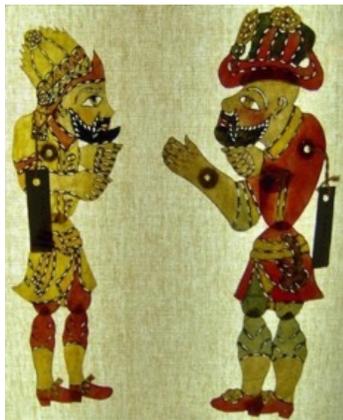


Figure 10. Karagöz and Hacivat

Hacivat continually attempts to "domesticate" Karagöz, but never makes progress. Hacivat emphasizes the upper body with his refined manners and aloof disposition, while Karagöz is more representational of "the lower body with eating, cursing, defecation and the

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<sup>81</sup> Eisha Nair. "The Mythical Origins of Shadow Puppets". *Sarmaya* (2020): <https://sarmaya.in/reads/the-best-shadow-puppetry-origin-stories-of-all-time/>

phallus."<sup>82</sup> Other characters in the plays are different, often stereotyped ethnic characters living under Ottoman domain such as Armenians, Albanians, Greeks, Jews, and Arabs. Karagöz–Hacivat plays have been especially associated with the *Ramadan* in Turkey.

Karagoz became an overtly politicized and sexually explicit genre that represented the voice of the lower class until Government censorship intervened in the late nineteenth century. As a result, Karagoz retained subversive traits, but resorted to innuendo rather than direct attacks.<sup>83</sup>

Karagöz theatre spread throughout the Ottoman Empire, where the characters were modified to local cultures and stereotypes but often retained the period setting in the late years of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>84</sup> The shadow theaters in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine were the ones mostly influenced by Ottoman style shadow puppetry.

Commented [21]: Maybe show map of late 19th century Ottoman Empire

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<sup>82</sup> Ersin Alok, "Karagöz-Hacivat: The Turkish Shadow Play", *Skylife-Şubat* (1996): p. 66–69.

<sup>83</sup> Serdar Öztürk. "Karagöz Co-Opted: Turkish Shadow Theatre of the Early Republic (1923-1945)". *University of Hawaii Press* (2021).

<sup>84</sup> David Robinson, "Light and Movement" (1995): Ch. 1.



Figure 11. Karagöz and Hacivat © Turkish Culture Foundation (2009)

Throughout the life of Karagöz theatre, Jews played a disproportionate role and were active contributors of creativity and culture wherever they were permitted to do so wherever they wandered. However, just as Jews were obligated to wear designated garments, as were other dhimmi to distinguish themselves from Muslims and forbidden from public displays of their faith, these Jewish puppeteers were forbidden from influencing the public with their culture and perspective.<sup>85</sup> However, the Jews would perform the story of Esther in private community shadow plays and incorporated the mythic Wawaq tree – an image depicting the hanging of Hayman and his sons from *Magilat Esther* – into traditional Karagöz theatre background features.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Rozen, M. (2006). The Ottoman Jews. In S. Faroqhi (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey* (Cambridge History of Turkey, pp. 256-271). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CHOL9780521620956.013

<sup>86</sup> Başgöz, İlhan. 'The Waqwaq Tree in the Turkish Shadow-Play Theatre Karagöz and the Story of Esther', in *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Levy. 549–558.



Figure 11. The Wawqwaq Tree

#### Subject of puppet plays in different Arab countries

Egypt was among the most fertile lands for shadow theater. Among the famous play scripts were:

*The Old Lighthouse (Al manar al qadeem)*, written by several authors over time, tells of battles during the crusades and the lighthouse of Alexandria. All the text is a rhymed dialogue between two characters Al Haziq and Al Rakhim (somehow, like Karagöz theatre) the first is a coward and the second tries to convince him to support the war effort. It is said that Salah ad Din enjoyed this play<sup>87</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> KAHLE, PAUL ERNST (1875–1965), Orientalist, scholar, and minister

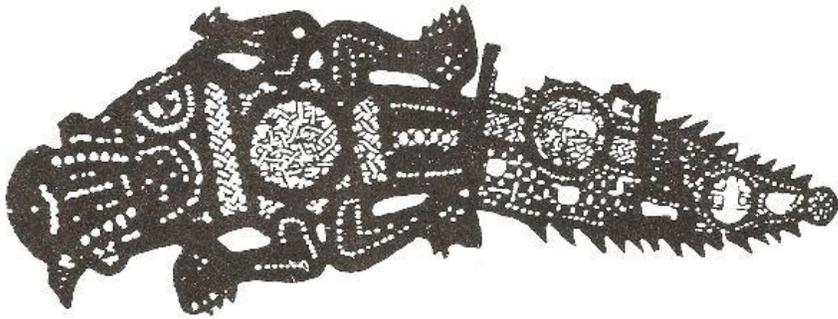


*The New Lighthouse (Al manar al hadeeth, starring the same two characters, Al Haziq and Al Rakhim, in different events, starting with lazy carpenters, who are late in building the battleships, unaware of the threat of the Franks, who soon arrive and destroy all the battleships. The situation is saved by "Al-Ghorab Al-Mansoor" (The victorious crow) who destroys all the enemy's battleships.*



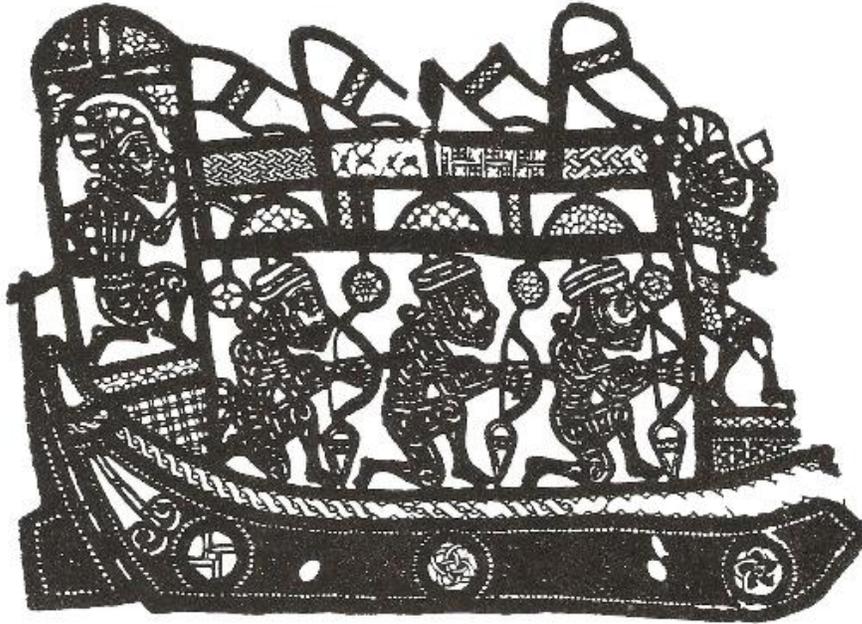
الراهب منجه، من الشخص  
التي عثر عليها ونشر رسمها كاله

*The Crocodile* tells the story of Zaberকাশ the farmer who laments over his bad luck. He is called by a sheikh to become a fisherman, but he is swallowed by a crocodile and then everybody gathers to save him.



التمساح من الشخصيات التي عثر عليها كانه في مصر. لعله كان يستخدم لعرض لعبة التمساح

*Alam and Taadeer* tells the love story between a Muslim young man Taadir and the daughter of a Christian monk Alam, after many adventures, she surrenders to his love, converts to Islam and they go to Mecca for Hajj.



سفنينة، من شخصوس لعب المنار

*The play of The spirit of Shadow (Tayf al khayal):*

The most important, original play-scripts for the shadow puppet plays – the trilogy of Shamseddine Ibn Danial al Mosuli (1238-1310), who fled Mosul (Iraq) to Egypt during the 13th century Mongol invasions (1258). These are considered as the oldest play-scripts in Arabic.

39

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Volume I is built on a series of misunderstandings, telling the story of prince “Wisal”, who searches for a bride with the help of a wicked matchmaker. She finds him a bride and once married he discovers that his wife is extremely ugly, and the matchmaker is killed. The plot is filled with references to the political situation in the country. It apparently praises the measures and hard sanctions imposed by Baibars, the reigning sultan at the time, against whom he accused of corruption under the pretext of maintaining security against a foreign enemy. Ibn Danial criticized these reforms, he presents a play highly obscene full of homosexuality.

The second text is “Ajeeb wa Ghareeb”, is radically different, it is a circus like show, composed of several acts, juggling, magic, animal taming and other performances uniquely depicting popular scenes in Egyptian marketplaces under the rule of the Mamluk. Ibn Danial ends this second play by the repenting characters journey to Mecca as in the first one.

The third play, “Al Mutayyam wa ad Da’i al Yatim” (The infatuated and the lost orphan), is dissolute far beyond the limits allowed in that period. It tells the story of the infatuated who does all he can to please his lover including cockfights, ram fights and bullfights, until the end of the play where there is a ceremony with all kinds of sexual perversions, then at a certain moment a deafening sound is heard, the angel of death appears, he has come to take the infatuated.

At the end of all three plays, the protagonist travels to Mecca to repent.

**Syria:**

Despite several indications to the presence of Shadow Theater in the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it is clear that the main period of prosperity of this art was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Damascus, Aleppo and along the coastline, as a result of the influence of the Turkish Karagoz Theater, merging with the Levantine Hakawati tradition to address the problems of everyday life in Syria and was also used as a satire to instigate the people against the Turks and preservation of Arab culture.<sup>88</sup>



***Shadow Theatre at Azem Museum, in Damascus.***

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<sup>88</sup> The Azem Palace museum in Damascus.



***Syrian Karagöz and Hacivat.***

People who frequented coffee shops waited for what was called “chapters of war”, stories presented after the Karagoz show, about historic events such as the Persian and Ghassanids wars, featuring public figures such as Sayf bin zi Yazan and Antara bin Shaddad, and characters from legends and popular tales such as Fadous Abu as Sabeh Rous (The seven headed Fadous) including djinn, monsters, and magic.<sup>89</sup>

**Lebanon:**

Shadow theater in Lebanon and Palestine is related to the Syrian tradition because of the geographical interconnection and the sociopolitical unity at that time. Shadow theater used

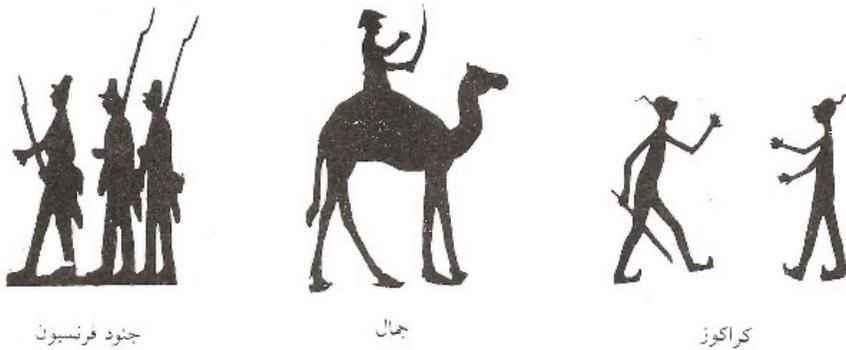
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<sup>89</sup> Faruk Saad, p. 741.

to show in coffee shops in across the Middle East and North Africa. Seven texts were widely shown during that period: *The beggars*, *Ifranjun*, *The Afiouni*, *The Hamam*, *The evening*, *The wooden logs*, *Amon*.<sup>90</sup>

### Algeria:

The Algerian shadow Theater used Karagoz (without the accompanying character Iwaz) to resist French occupation such as a scene where a giant Karagoz would vanquish French colonial forces with his penis which contributed to the French prohibition of shadow plays in Algeria.<sup>91</sup> The published texts include *Karagoz and the French troupe*, *The devil in French clothes*, *The love affairs of Karagoz*, and *Karagoz varieties* inspired by *Thousand and one nights*.



In the 1920s and 30s, *Karagoz* came into direct competition with the global export of animated cartoons like Mickey Mouse. During the Famous puppeteers, Sefa and Irfan, were

<sup>90</sup> Enno Litman.

<sup>91</sup> Puckler, 1835, Algiers.

among those saying, "Karagöz must be modernized," and Sefa asserted that Karagöz had to be like "the newest American comic, 'Mickey'". Hikmet Feridun, a prominent journalist who shared the government's ideology, claimed that Karagöz would surpass Mickey Mouse if the theatre could reflect the innovations of the age. "Think for a while how animated pictures, called Mickey, have the world eating out of their hands. But Mickey's many followers are children, whereas Karagöz's witty remarks give adults fun as well as children. [Mickey Mouse] Films are like snacks, ordinary and easy to get, whereas Karagöz is a treasure, which can never be found anywhere else for adults and children".<sup>92</sup>

#### ***Turkish Gostermalik (Turkish Shadowplay)***

#### **Characters of Arabic popular drawing style:**

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the popular drawing style for characters prevailed, especially in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine. The popular style is that found in illustrations tattooed on human skin, on paper, on textile, on certain tools or on walls. These drawings usually do not respect the anatomic proportions of the human body or the proportions of other objects, there is also no respect whatsoever of perspective rules. This style adapted to each country according to the local taste, hence the difference between the forms of the characters across the Arab countries from Syria to Algeria.

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<sup>92</sup> Serdar Öztürk. "Karagöz Co-Opted: Turkish Shadow Theatre of the Early Republic (1923-1945). *University of Hawai'i Press* (2006).



#### Characters of primitive or particular style:

The Libyan and Tunisian shadow characters were very simple, without colors or perforations.

Algerian characters were influenced by the paper cutting art and Parisian shadow puppet characters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is not unlikely that Algerian puppeteers have seen French puppet shows, because of the intensive influence of the French colonial culture on the Algerian society.

Commented [22]: Need picture/video of Libyan shadow puppets.

Today traditional shadow theater is completely extinct in many countries, such as Lebanon, Palestine and Algeria and Syria. There were no initiatives in these countries to revive this art, except through the efforts of few individuals who were unable spread their ideas.

Commented [23]: Who? Ask Karim dakroub

The first [preserved] animated feature film was "The Adventures of Prince Achmed" (1926), which borrowed from both the Turkish shadow puppet tradition and Scheherazade's *One Thousand and One Nights*.



Figure 12. Poster & trailer for Lotte Reiniger's "The Adventures of Prince Achmed" (1926).

The theatre Al-Kasaba was the first to use puppets in its performances for children. The first puppets were made by the Russian-born Israeli puppeteers Simion Golik and Vadim Dikerman who taught manipulation techniques to the actors of the Al-Kasaba theatre. Most of the puppets were glove or rod puppet figures. The puppet performance *Little Red Riding Hood* show debuted at Al-Kasaba in 1995.

Abdul Salam Abdo, from the Palestinian National Theatre, is regarded among the foremost puppet artists in Palestine. He has produced his own plays that have toured Palestine, Arab countries, and international festivals.

Nidal Al-Khateeb became the second Palestinian to create puppet theatre. Nidal Khatib started his journey in a prison cell. In 1982, Khatib was jailed in Israel for six months for distributing posters during Land Day. There he met his fellow detainees, who became part of the "theatre" they all created. They turned the cell into a stage and used the tools available to

Commented [AH24]: Maybe add: the Palestinian National Theatre/ Al-Hakawati, founded in 1984, is considered the first inspirer for a large number of Palestinian puppet theatre artists. The initiative of this theatre to set up The First International Puppet Theatre Festival in 1989, and to continue it annually on a regular basis gave the local Palestinian audience the opportunity to get to know and enjoy the many local and international performances and keep up with everything new in the world of puppet art. <http://museum.arabpuppettheatre.org/index.php/bands/band-info/?id=recDCchf8QYB4vLZ>

Commented [AH25]: which plays? What is their significance?

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Adel Tartir  
Palestine  
Theatrical artist, storyteller and owner of "Sandouq El-Ajab" (The Wonder Box), Adel Tartir, is one of the most important pioneers and founders of the contemporary theatrical movement in Palestine in his work in theatre for nearly half a century. He was one of the founders of the theatrical Group "Balaleen" (1970) and Sandouq El-Ajab Theatrical Group (1975). In the early nineties, Tartir used the heritage 'Peep Box' (Wonder Box) and the storyteller 'Abu al-Ajab' in his theatrical

them as props. After joining the *Hakawati Theatre* in Jerusalem, he founded the Al-Tantoura puppet theatre troupe in Hebron in 1995.



Nidal Al-Khateeb

He was put in a prison called "*Ansar-3*" again for six months for his activism during the 1<sup>st</sup> intifada in 1998, where he produced his next play "*Ansar-3*" expressing his experience in prison. His play "*Dreams of Halima*", intended for adolescents and their parents, addresses child marriage, and was produced in association with several pro-women organizations. "*Butto in Jerusalem*" tells the story of a youth and his grandfather who are prevented from going to Jerusalem by the Israeli army.



Figure 13. From Al-Khateeb's puppet theatre in documentary *Palestine, Palestine* © 2002 Dominique Dubosc

Khatib, his wife Maysoun, and their children all play integral roles in his productions. The couple was awarded the Palestine Award for Excellence and Creativity in 2010.

In 2012, the couple produced a shadow play, "*The Inferno of the Shadow*", addressing violence against women and their right to inheritance.<sup>93</sup>



Snapshot from "*The Inferno of the Shadow*" © 2012 Nidal and Maysoun Khatib

<sup>93</sup> "Nidal Khatib, A Palestinian Puppeteer". *Puppetring* (2012): <http://www.puppetring.com/2012/07/13/nidal-khatib-a-palestinian-puppeteer/>

Commented [AH27]: Add:  
Nidal Khatib started his journey in a prison cell. Back in 1982, Khatib was put in an Israeli jail for six months for distributing posters during Land Day. There he met his fellow detainees, who became part of the "theatre" they all created. They turned the cell into a stage and used the tools available to them as props. This was the starting point for Khatib that led him to become an exquisite puppeteer.



Mahmoud Al-Hourani is a British-Palestinian actor and playwright, and a graduate of the Royal Central London School of Speech and Drama. He is the director and founder of the Arab Puppet Theatre Foundation since 2008 with a mission to revive and develop the use of puppet theatre in the Arab world, producing dozens of plays including “One Thousand and One Titanics”, addressing the plight of refugees together with Palestinian Puppeteer, Rakan Abdolrahman Al-Khali.<sup>94, 95</sup>



Hooda Shawa is a Kuwaiti-Palestinian author of award-winning popular children’s books including “The Birds’ Journey to Mount Qaf” and “Elephant’s Journey” (*“Rihla Fil”*), and “My

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.arabbritishcentre.org.uk/projects/a-performance-desperately-in-need-of-an-audience/>

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/5/6/puppet-show-casts-spotlight-on-refugee-crisis>

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Palestinian Grandmother". She founded *TAQA Productions Company* in Kuwait, which has produced several films, operettas, and puppet shows including:

*The Gift* (2017) – A shadow play written by Hooda Shawa, directed by Mahmoud Hourani, based on a true story set during the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE in the palace of Abbasid Caliph Harun Al-Rashid, who hosts emissaries sent by Emperor Charlemagne. As the foreign dignitaries prepare for their long journey back home, the Caliph offers an array of lavish gifts to be sent along, including an albino elephant named Abou Al-Abbas, raising the question: "Had the Caliph heard of the German proverb 'small gifts preserve friendships'?".

*Julnar and the Firebird* (2019) – a puppet show presented by TAQA Productions, written by Hooda Shawa and Dr. Nabil Bahgat. From the balcony of the Palace of Wonders in the island of Zanzibar off the coast of East Africa, Princess Julnar watches sailing wooden ships arrive from Kuwait. Julnar's dreams of seafaring come true when she sets sail on a quest to find a cure for her friend the Firebird, who sheds his beautiful feathers when afraid.<sup>96</sup>



Poster of "*Julnar and the Firebird*" © 2019 TAQA Productions

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.jacc-kw.com/full-season-calendar/>

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<https://www.tamerinst.org/en/products/150>

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“*Duma Fe Darna*” (“Puppet show in Our Home”) [Series](#) (2020) – a Puppets series produced by TAQA Productions and Fuse Media Production that introduces children to famous Arab figures and teaches them how to make their own puppets, sponsored by *Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences*, written by Hooda Shawa, directed by Ahmad Talal.<sup>97</sup>



Screenshot of the [Duma Fe Darna Series](#) © 2020 TAQA Productions

Hossam Zuheika (b.1962) is a puppet maker and performer who trained at the Palestine National Theatre and created several shows including “*Ass Kicks Asses*” and “*The Mermaid*”.

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.taqaproductions.com/taqa/> (Accessed 1 December 2021).

The Festival of Puppetry organized by the Palestinian National Theatre in Jerusalem began in 1989. It is the only international festival of puppet theatre in the Palestinian territory, but being in Jerusalem, the participation of companies from the West Bank and Gaza has been difficult because of travel restrictions imposed on the territories by Israeli military authorities, but in 2011 the festival was held in Nablus, Jerusalem, and Ramallah to accommodate audiences in different areas.<sup>98</sup>

Puppetry has played an important role in communications especially for “the Arab street” because it is easier to avoid censorship than live-action since it is perceived as less real, less threatening and because puppets can be made from practically anything, socks, plastic bottles, paper, and glue to provide entertainment and communicate ideas and values for communities that lack resources.<sup>99</sup>

*El Leila El Kebira* (الليلة الكبيرة) (*The Grand Night* or *The Big Night*) is a 1961 Egyptian puppet-opera that was written by poet Salah Jahin with the music composed by Sayed Mekawy. The opera describes the celebration of the last night of the moulid, a festival celebrating the Prophet Mohamed’s birthday, through a playful, colorful and musically lively display of the activities done in an Egyptian village including scenes from the carnival and the circus including food stall vendors, a fortune teller, hummus, circus performers and belly dancers, with

<sup>98</sup> World Encyclopedia of Puppetry Arts: <https://wepa.unima.org/en/palestine/#:~:text=Hossam%20Zuheika%20%28b.1962%29%20is%20a%20puppet%20maker%20and,Palestinian%20National%20Theatre%20in%20Jerusalem%20began%20in%201989.> (Accessed 1 November 2021).

<sup>99</sup> Dina Kobrosly. “Women Puppeteers in Lebanon”. *Les Amis des Marionnettes* (2017): <http://lesamisdesmarionnettes.blogspot.com>

Commented [30]: For more arab/Palestinian puppetry see:  
<https://rabbanifoundation.org/portfolio/the-arab-puppet-theatre/>  
<https://wepa.unima.org/en/palestine/arabpuppettheatre.org>

catchy Egyptian folk songs and rhythms.<sup>100, 101</sup> Approximately 40-minutes in length, it continues to make an impression on Egyptian-Muslim popular culture across the region. In 2011 Jordan-based animation studio “Kharabeesh” adapted it into an animated short.



Figure 13. *El Leila Kabira* © 2002 Kharabeesh 2011

Egyptian animation studio, “Giraffics” has adapted *El Leila El Kebira* into a full-length animated feature film for release in 2022. Giraffics’ adaptation revolves around a little girl, Laila, and her passion for her grandfather’s stories. After being bullied by her schoolmates, Laila

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<sup>100</sup> Cairo Live Event Guide: El Laila El Kebira <http://cairoliveeventsguide.blogspot.com/2008/09/el-laila-el-kebir-puppet-musical.html>

<sup>101</sup> Ati Metwaly. “East West bonanza: Lorkiana and El Leila El Kebira”. Ahrām Online: <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/5/33/29442/Arts--Culture/Music/PHOTO-GALLERY-East-West-bonanza-Lorkiana-and-El-Le.aspx> (Accessed 22 August 2021).

escapes to a fictional world through the Bioscope, where she finds herself surrounded by her favorite characters from “The Grand Night”, but she will have to confront a villain, Ommena El Ghoula, to save her story and return to her home.<sup>102</sup>



Figure 14. *El Leila El Kebira* (الليلة الكبيرة) “The Grand Night” © 2021 Giraffics

There is an interesting history of government sponsorship and censorship in film, specifically cartoons, in both democratic and authoritarian countries.

During World War II, Private Snafu (a military slang acronym SNAFU, "Situation Normal: All F-ed Up") was a series of humorous instructional adult animated shorts, produced between

<sup>102</sup> [Mohamed Rashed](#). “El Leila El Kebira: The Iconic Puppet Operetta Becomes A Full-Feature Animation And The Trailer Is Magic!”. *ScoopEmpire* (2020):

**Commented [AH31]:** Maybe add:  
The spread of memes across time and culture can also be witnessed by following the legendary character “Juha” → “Djoha, a famous character all over the Mediterranean from Egypt, Algeria, Greece, and Turkey. He represents an ambiguous character because he can often be stupid and naive, but is also clever and can do tricks.  
Using shadow puppets, the company adapted a story where Djoha puts his son on the back of a donkey. All the people of the town laugh and whisper that this son is so cruel to sit on the donkey and make his poor, old father walk. So both of them walk – but then all the people of the town whisper at how stupid they are. Then they both ride on the donkey, and all the people say, Oh, what a poor mistreated donkey. So finally the father and son decide to carry the donkey together on their back – at which point in the story the company switched from shadow puppets to actors with a 3D, two-metre long donkey puppet that two performers carried on their back.”  
<http://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animations-online/features/puppetry-in-lebanon>

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1943 and 1945 under Leon Schlesinger's Warner Bros. which outbid Disney for the contract.<sup>103</sup>

104, 105



Figure 9. Private Snafu

The Cold War was a war of ideologies. Each side relied heavily on the ideological unity of its people, often employing the power of the visual arts — graphic design, animation, illustration — to drive its message home.<sup>106</sup>

Japanese Anime, Manga, and Video Games characters are globally ubiquitous. Japan wields these cultural exports for soft power influence.<sup>107</sup>

**Commented [32]:** Could also add censorship of Disney to appease China

**Commented [33]:** Could list/find examples of Soviet and American cold war propaganda animation

<sup>103</sup> Karl F. Cohen. "Forbidden Animation: Censored Cartoons and Blacklisted Animators in America". *McFarland & Company* (2004).

<sup>104</sup> WWII PRIVATE SNAFU Cartoons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnrgtEzblOE>

<sup>105</sup> Darryn King. "South Korean Government to Pump \$338 Million into Anima Animation Industry". *CartoonBrew* (2015).

<sup>106</sup> Maria Popova. "Animated Soviet Propaganda: What warthogs and vultures have to do with the most critical polarization in world politics". *Brain Pickings* (2011).

<sup>107</sup> Douglas McGray. "Japan's Gross National Cool". *Foreign Policy* (2009).



Figure 13. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as Nintendo's "Super Mario" at 2016 Rio Olympics behind collage Manga & Anime characters.

Similarly, webtoons have emerged as a popular cultural export in Korea as they have been adapted to film and television.<sup>108, 109</sup>

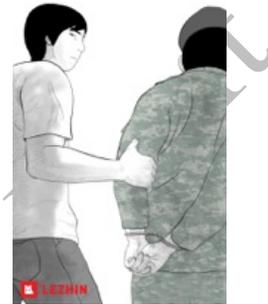


Image from "D.P Dog's Day," written by Kim Boton, adapted to Netflix. © Lezhin Entertainment

*The Journey* (2021) was a joint feature animation production between Japanese anime studio Toei Animation and Saudi animation studio Manga Productions, a subsidiary of the MISK Foundation, based on an epic tale inspired by the history and culture of the Arabian Peninsula

<sup>108</sup> "Webtoons are South Korea's latest export hit": Film and television adaptations have spread their influence beyond comic aficionados". *The Economist* (2021):

<https://www.economist.com/asia/2021/07/31/webtoons-are-south-koreas-latest-export-hit>

<sup>109</sup> Hillary Lee. "Netflix adapts popular Korean webtoon" *News Article Insider* (2020):

<https://newsarticleinsiders.com/netflix-adapts-popular-korean-webtoon>

with the distinctive anime animation style. Chief advisor of Toei Animation and an executive producer on the project, Shimizu Shinji stated that, it was “a great challenge for us as Japanese from the Far East to share in the history of ancient Arabia, which has completely different customs and cultures from ours.” But “with the supervision and assistance of the Saudi team, we were able to collect the materials and ideas needed to prepare this film.”<sup>110</sup> Through this cross-cultural collaboration, under government sponsorship and supervision, the venture was able to build bonds between the two disparate nations.



Figure 14. The Journey (2021) Movie Poster Copyright © Manga Productions & Toei Animation: [Trailer](#)

In the 1980s, Ireland invested the biggest grant it had ever offered a non-manufacturing company to former Disney animator Don Bluth to jumpstart its animation industry.<sup>111</sup> Countries

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<sup>110</sup> “How Saudi Arabia and Japan came together for Manga Productions’ animation ‘The Journey’”. *ScreenDaily* (2021).

<sup>111</sup> Alex Dudok De Wit. “Don Bluth’s Invasion of Ireland: A New Podcast Reveals the Untold Story.” *Cartoon Brew* (2020).

around the world subsidize animation production as a means of promoting cultural heritage and language preservation, especially for the next generation.<sup>112, 113</sup>

The history of American comics shows the transformation of popular culture between conservative and progressive perspectives of realism and idealism. The Golden Age of Comic (1930s to early-1950s) saw the rise of modern archetypal heroes. The Silver Age of Comics (1956 to circa 1970), saw the three-dimensionality of heroes, focusing on the person behind the mask with their flaws and anxieties. In the 1960s artists such as Robert Crumb and Ralph Bakshi pioneered “underground comix”, creating comics and animation that delved into graphic subject matter banned by the 1954 Code of NGO Comics Authority, which had been created to monitor moral guidelines around such subjects as violence, sex, and drugs in comics. In the 1970s through the 2000s independent publishers proliferated and adult themes became mainstream, pioneered by creators such as Alan Moore. From the mid-2010s onward, comics, literature, and pop-culture of all kinds feature more diverse identity representation both on and behind the page, exhibiting intersectional, social activist, post-modernist qualities, including the replacement of traditional heroes with new identities.<sup>114</sup> Together, these comics, especially those brought to the *big screen*, have shaped and reflected the zeitgeist of American idealism and realism for decades, evolving into modern mythology.

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<sup>112</sup> Geoffrey MacNab. “How state support is transforming the European animation industry.” *ScreenDaily* (2019).

<sup>113</sup> Alex Dudok De Wit. “Animation Is Key to The BBC’s Efforts To Preserve An Endangered Language”. *Cartoon Brew* (2021).

<sup>114</sup> Laticia Marshall. “Representations of Women and Minority Groups in Comics”. *San José University* (2019).



Golden Age (1938-1950) © Marvel  
 Silver Age (1956-1970) © Marvel  
 Underground Comix (Late-60s)  
 Bronze Age (1970-1984) © Marvel  
 Modern Age (1985-early 2010s)  
 Post-Modern Age (Mid-2010s-Present) © Marvel

Figure 16. Timeline of American Comics Movement

“Pictures speak a thousand words, animations speak a thousand pictures.”<sup>115</sup> Adding sound, music, and animation amplifies audience engagement. Animated movies and series have made and continue to make significant impressions on young people. Disney movies such as *Aladdin*, *Mulan*, *Moana*, and *Coco* leave significant impressions of cultural identity. Such widely distributed, resource-intensive, cross-cultural products demand responsibility and inclusivity in how they portray the societies they represent.<sup>116, 117</sup>

Commented [34]: Maybe talk about the actual differences between comics and animation and how they are consumed, namely the difference in time

Commented [35]: Could reference the warnings and censorship of old animated films on platforms like Disney+

Commented [36]: Maybe find a reputable academic source on attention span and the use of animation to improve engagement to add the argument that animation is an effective tool for “edutainment”. “Especially in the age of information, when...”

### A Comparative Semitic and Middle Eastern History of Cartoons

Arab cartoonists often consider the origins of comics to be traced back to Egyptian hieroglyphics and the 13<sup>th</sup> century illustrated stories of *Maqāmāt* and *Kalīla wa-Dimna*,

<sup>115</sup> Zunar. *Zunar.my* (2021).

<sup>116</sup> Souad Belkhyr. “Disney Animation: Global Diffusion and Local Appropriation of Culture”. *Études Caribéennes* (2012).

<sup>117</sup> Richard Gray. “There’s a good chance that some of your beliefs have been influenced by decades of animated movies.” *BBC* (2019).

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underlining the traditional Arab roots of the medium.<sup>118</sup>

The *Maqāmāt* emerged as a major Arabic literary form in the 10th century, beginning with *Maqamat Badi' az-Zaman al-Hamadhani* – a series of anecdotes of social satire written and the narrative concerns the travels of a middle-aged man as he uses his charm and eloquence to swindle his way across the Arabic world. *Maqāmāt* grew from the literary tradition of *adab*, a word that refers to both “literature” and “etiquette” revealing the nature of these stories to educate the public on proper behavior and worldview, based on Islamic principles but also with many influences from cultures and religions across the known world, which developed during the height of Abbasid culture in the 9th century and continued through the Middle Ages in the Islamic world. In 1237, Iraqi Muslim painter, Yahya ibn Mahmud al-Wasiti, created 96 illustrations for the legendary *Maqāmāt* of Iraqi poet and scholar al-Hariri of Basra.<sup>119</sup> *Maqāmā*, revealing glimpses into and commentaries on 13th-century Islāmic life with expressive figures, and vivid but controlled colors. Al-Wasiti's illustrations, which are among the finest examples of a style used in the 13th-century, served as an inspiration for the modern Baghdad art movement in the 20th-century, which blended Turkish art and native Christian

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<sup>118</sup> Douglas, Allen, Douglas, Fedwa Malti, Arab Comic Strips: Politics of an Emerging Mass Culture, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1994.

<sup>i</sup> Syncretism – The combining of different beliefs, while blending practices of various schools of thought. Syncretism involves the merging or assimilation of several originally discrete traditions, especially in theology and mythology, asserting an underlying unity and allowing for an inclusive approach to other faiths, often expressed through the arts. {Source: “Syncretism”. *Encyclopædia Britannica (1911)*}

<sup>119</sup> Roxburgh, David (2013). "In Pursuit of Shadows: Al- Hariri's Maqāmāt". *Muqarnas*. **30**: 171–212. doi:[10.1163/22118993-0301p0009](https://doi.org/10.1163/22118993-0301p0009) – via JSTOR: [https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/droxburgh/files/muq\\_30\\_roxburgh.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/droxburgh/files/muq_30_roxburgh.pdf)

(probably Jacobite or Syriac Miaphysite) painting in a lively Islamic syncretism. *Sefer Tahkemoni*, imitated the structure of al-Hamadani and al-Hariri, but his work also reflects his Jewish identity in a society that was in transition, shifting from al-Andalus to Christian Iberia.

The illustrated *Maqāmāt* influenced the aesthetics of the Turkish Shadow Puppet Theatre, shown through the emphasis of the outline, the dramatic behavior and mobile gestures of figures, the strong contrast between figures and the background, and the tendency of the figures being present in an unregulated setting.<sup>120</sup>

The *Maqāmāt* illustrations have stylistic characteristics of other religions such as Christianity and Judaism, such as the use of gold circles behind the heads of characters to denote authority traditionally used in Christian iconography to denote holiness, as well as Jewish gravestones.<sup>121</sup>

Commented [37]: Edit and add more about the spread of Maqamat in Hebrew and Jewish Maqamat. The maqāma genre was also cultivated in Hebrew in Spain, beginning with Yehūda al-Ḥarīzī's translation of al-Ḥarīrī's maqāmāt into Hebrew (c. 1218), which he titled maḥberōt 'itī'el ("the maqāmāt of Ithiel"). Two years later, he composed his own maḥbārōt, titled Sēfer Tahkemōnī ("The Book of the Tachmonite"). With this work, al-Ḥarīzī sought to raise the literary prestige of Hebrew to exceed that of Classical Arabic, just as the bulk of Iberian Jewry was finding itself living in a Spanish-speaking, Latin- or Hebrew-literate environment and Arabic was becoming less commonly studied and read.[35] Later Hebrew maqāmāt made more significant departures, structurally and stylistically, from the classical Arabic maqāmāt of al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī. Joseph ibn Zabara (end of the 12th-beginning of 13th century), a resident of Barcelona and Catalan speaker, wrote the Sēfer sha'ashū'im ("The Book of Delights"), in which the author, the narrator, and the protagonist are all Ibn Zabara himself, and in which the episodes are arranged in linear, not cyclical fashion, in a way that anticipates the structure of Spanish picaresque novels such as the anonymous Lazarillo de Tormes (1554) and Guzmán de Alfarache (1599) by Mateo Alemán.

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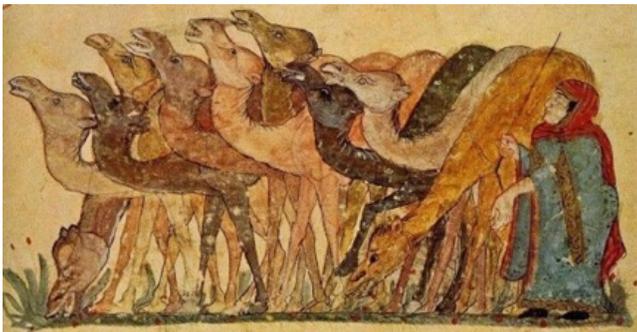
<sup>120</sup> Alain F. George. "The Illustrations of The Maqāmāt and The Shadow Play". *The University of Edinburgh, Muqarnas*, vol. 28, pp. 1-42.

<sup>121</sup> Geoffrey R. D. King. "The Earliest Islamic Illustrated Manuscript, The *Maqāmāt* and a Graveyard at Suhār, Oman". From Contadini, Anna. *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts*, BRILL, 2007. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/brandeis-ebooks/detail.action?docID=489417>. Created from brandeis-ebooks on 2021-07-10 23:23:20.

The Al-Hariri *Maqāmāt* has been regarded as the Arabic greatest literary treasure after the Qur'an.<sup>122</sup>



Fig. 1. *Maqāmāt* of al-Hariri, copied and illustrated by Yahya b. Mahmud b. Yahya b. Abi al-Hasan b. Kuwarrilha al-Wasiti, dated 7 Ramadan 634 (May 4, 1237), Baghdad, Iraq. (Photo: © Bibliothèque nationale de France)



<sup>122</sup> Horne, Charles F. "The Assemblies Of Al Hariri: The Most Renowned Piece Of Pure Literature In Arabic". Kessinger Publishing, LLC (2005).

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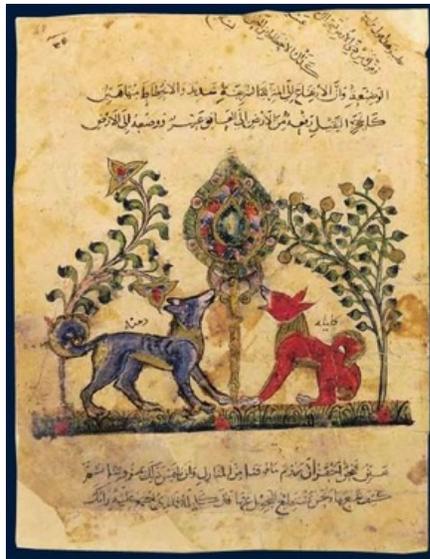
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More al-Hariri *Maqāmāt* illustrations by Yahya b. Mahmud

*Kalīla wa-Dimna* is a book containing a collection of didactic fables, originating from the Sanskrit text “*Pañcatantra*”, which is said to have been written by Indian scholar Bedba for Debshleem, the king of India. Kalila and Dimna, translated into Arabic by Persian Muslim convert, Abdullah Ibn al Muqaffa’ in the Abbasid age circa 750 A.D., is considered a masterpiece of Arabic and world literature, still a tenant of Arab pop-culture today, taught in Arab schools and Arabic classes across the world, and translated into over 100 languages. Its religious and

social context changed from Hinduism via Zoroastrianism to Islam. It also is considered the first secular fiction in the Arabic language.<sup>123,124</sup>



An Arabic drawing from the book “*Kalila wa-Dimna*” from 1220 AD, depicting the jackal characters, “Kalila” and “Dimna”.

The Al Jazeera Children’s Channel adapted the famous Indian tale of “Kalila and Dimna” as an animated, educational series for children, as a celebration of the channel’s first anniversary in 2006.<sup>125, 126</sup>

<sup>123</sup> “Kalila and Dimna”. *World Digital Library, Library of Congress*: <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/8933/> (Accessed 10 July 2021).

<sup>124</sup> Paul Lunde. “Kalila wa-Dimna”. *Muslim Heritage* (2011): <https://muslimheritage.com/kalila-wa-dimna/> (Accessed 10 July 2021).

<sup>125</sup> Nadia Qaraqra. “5 Arabic Cartoons to Laugh Your Way Through Language Learning.” *FluentU*

<sup>126</sup> <http://www.arabic-toons.com/kalelah-wa-demnah-1464254754-179.html#sets>

Commented [39]: Could add something about during the golden age of Islam, Arabic literature - with the exception of Chinese literature - has the largest medieval corpus of humorous short prose in the world. In this way, the Arabic adab literature, as the central hub for such texts, can be assigned an appropriate status in the network of complex cultural interrelationships  
→ [https://www.academia.edu/19342093/Arabia\\_ridens\\_Die\\_humoristische\\_Kurzprosa\\_der\\_fr%C3%BChen\\_adab\\_Literatur\\_im\\_internationalen\\_Traditionsgeflecht\\_vol\\_1](https://www.academia.edu/19342093/Arabia_ridens_Die_humoristische_Kurzprosa_der_fr%C3%BChen_adab_Literatur_im_internationalen_Traditionsgeflecht_vol_1)

And that Adab means both literature and eittiquet imlyng the role of stories to teach values and behavior  
Source: Qasid

Could also add something about Arab poetry  
“the Arabs believed that poets were possessed by Jinn”  
→ Hamza Yusuf and Scott Crider. “The Art and Artifice of Poetry. *Renovatio: The Journal of Zaytuna* (2018): 41:00.

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In modernity, the appearance of comics in the Arab world is linked to the printing of children's magazines. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, some books began to appear containing widely illustrated stories and with educational intentions that were circulated in school environments. The first of these was the Egyptian "*Rawḍat al-Madāris*" ("The school garden"), published by the minister of education, 'Alī Mubārakin, 1870. The concept of comics at the time relegated the drawing to a supporting role and to a simple learning facilitation tool. Other examples of these magazines are *Samīr aṣ-ṣaġīr* ("Little Samīr", 1877), *al-Madrasa* ("The school", 1893) and *at-Tilmīd* ("The pupil", 1893), from whose titles it is clear the didactic and scholastic nature.<sup>127</sup>

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Arab political cartoons began in 1880s Cairo with Yaḡub Sanu, whose drawings and text lambasted Egypt's then viceroy, Ismail Pasha. Sanu established the first theatre in Egypt in 1870 where he presented 26 plays and published a magazine called "*Abu Nadhara*" meaning "Father of Glasses" which became his nickname. Sanu was an Egyptian Jew who was born in Cairo in 1839. His father worked for Prince Yaken, the grandson of Muhammad Ali Pasha, Khedive of Egypt and Sudan. When Yaḡub was thirteen he wrote an Arabic poem and recited it in front of the prince who was fascinated by the young boy's talents. The prince later sent him to be educated in Livorno, Italy in 1853, where he studied Arts and Literature. When he returned to Egypt in 1855, he worked as a tutor for the prince's twelve children before he

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<sup>127</sup> Emanuela De Blasio. "Comics in the Arab world: Birth and spread of a new literary genre". *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* (March 2020): <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/anqe.67162>.

became a teacher in the Arts and Crafts School in Cairo. Sanu was very successful until his activities, namely his anti-establishment, anti-imperial positions, began to anger the royal family of Egypt, who shut down his magazine and theater and exiled him from Egypt. Sanu fled to Paris where he died in 1912.<sup>128, 129, 130</sup>

Commented [42]: More on Yaqub Sanu including good pics:  
<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-egyptian-satirist-who-inspired-a-revolution>



Figure 17. Cartoon from Abu Nadhara Magazine by Yaqub Sanu.

<sup>128</sup> Ashraf Abdulhamid. "Egyptian Jews Down memory lane with famous artists, actors". *Al-Arabiya* (2020).

<sup>129</sup> Jonathan Guyer. *On the Arab Page*. Le Monde Diplomatique (2017).

<sup>130</sup> The entire digital collection of Sanua's satirical newspapers is available at [kjc-sv016.kjc.uni-heidelberg.de:8080/exist/apps/naddara/index.html/](http://kjc-sv016.kjc.uni-heidelberg.de:8080/exist/apps/naddara/index.html/).

Al-Awlad (The Boys), published in 1922, fully embodied comics style. “As was common for comics from 1920 to 1950, the content in “Al-Awlad” was created not as propaganda but rather simply to entertain children”.<sup>131, 132</sup>



Figure 18. “Al-Awlad”, *Dar al-Lata'if*, Egypt (1923–1932).

<sup>131</sup> Nadim Damluji, “The Violence of Localizing Western Comics for Arab Children”. Arab Comics: 90 Years of Popular Visual Culture Symposium. Cogut Center for the Humanities and the Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University, and the Mu'taz and Rada Sawwaf Arabic Comics Initiative and Libraries at the American University of Beirut (2015).

<sup>132</sup> “The Arab Comix Project: Arab and Arab-Diaspora Graphic Fiction”. Humbolt University: <https://arabcomixproject.weebly.com/comic-strips--comic-books.html>

Satiric imagery in the Interwar Egyptian press (1919-1936) reflects the interactions between the semi-colonial hegemony and the emerging Egyptian national self-image, within the context of Egypt's transition from an Ottoman vilayet to a nation-state. The satirical caricatures represented and expressed the discourses engaging with the roles of the two political cultures – Egyptian and European – contending for hegemony over the new Egyptian culture. These images mapped the changing human and urban fabric, disseminated and instilled its symbols whereby the local modern community could interpret their changing reality.<sup>133</sup>

In 1925, Lebanese born stage-actress and a pioneer and patron Arab female journalism and publishing, Fatma Al Youssef founded the news magazine [Rōz al-Yūsuf](#), which did not hesitate to use caricatures to address social issues and taboo subjects such as religion and sexuality, frequently narrating the 'flapper-age' of Egyptian society featuring the work of such renowned artists as Abed Al-Sami, Ahmad Hijjazi, and Alexander Saroukhan. Saroukhan's "al-Masri Effendi", a middle-aged Egyptian "everyman" caricature wearing a Turkish fez and western suit, holding prayer beads, premiered in Ruz al-Yusuf in 1930. Effendi embodied of the feelings of the nation in the context of a modernity developing alongside a continued struggle with British colonial rule. Effendi also became a site of contestation, over the supposed Egyptian character and the nature of Egyptianness (relating to issues of class, race, and gender). Throughout the 1930s, al-Masri Effendi, often presented as a pitiful bureaucrat, came to be the

**Commented [43]:** Maybe add tidbit about or show cartoons of [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmed\\_Hijazi\\_\(cartoonist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmed_Hijazi_(cartoonist))

**Commented [44]:** For Saroukhan Gallery see: <https://artcentron.com/2016/04/21/egypt-political-cartoons-history/>

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<sup>133</sup> Keren Zdafee. "Al-Masri Effendi: The Caricatured Image of the Reading public; A Reflection of Modern Egyptian National Identity". *The Department of Art History Faculty of the Arts, Tel-Aviv University, Israel*.

reflection of the emerging Egyptian middle class or the modern Egyptian public, a sort of an “ideal citizen”, bearing the national mission. His satirical image reveals a process of cultural transfer, one that was essential to the emergence of the Egyptian middle class, while seeking to define and shape its national identity and culture.<sup>134</sup>



Figure 20. “Al-Masri Effendi”

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<sup>134</sup> Keren Zdafee. “Between imagined and ‘real’: Sarukhan’s al-Masri Effendi cartoons in the first half of the 1930s.” *Comic Empires* (2019). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526142955.00015>



Figure 19. Alexander Saroukhan, "The Arab League and Its Founding" (1945).



Figure 18. Alexander Saroukhan, *Serry Pasha Fails in Playing the National Anthem*, Source: Al Masar Gallery 70

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In 1930s British-controlled Palestine, political cartoons were popular in major newspapers, especially among the illiterate. In this repressive atmosphere, political cartoons were useful because subversive messages could be shifted from the text to the image, where they were more likely to pass censorship regulations.<sup>135, 136</sup>



Figure 19. Front pages of *Falastin* newspaper (1936).

<sup>135</sup> Shaw, Sir Walter Sidney. Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929: Evidence Heard During the 1st [-47th] Sittings, HM Stationery Office, 1930.

<sup>136</sup> Sufian, Sandy. "Anatomy of the 1936–39 Revolt: Images of the Body in Political Cartoons of Mandatory Palestine", *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37, No.2 (2008).

By the mid-century, original comics magazines like *Samir* and *Sindibâd* united the imaginations of young audiences throughout Arab countries and shaped how political tropes of pan-Arabism circulated in children's media.

Sindibad (also written as Sinbad) was launched in 1952 in Egypt. The publication was distributed by the company Dar El Maaref and centered around the legendary literary character, Sinbad the Sailor from the fairy tale collection "Arabian Nights". Hussein Amin Bicar (1913-2002) was one of Egypt's most prominent artists of the 20th century and was the Sindibad's main artist. Bicar is credited for initiating a style of journalistic art that elevated illustrating for newspapers to the level of fine art. As the first Egyptian artist to illustrate Arabic children's books, Bicar played a major role in establishing and promoting this field, beginning with Taha Hussein's *The Stream of Days* (1943), which was the first illustrated book to be published in Egypt.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Bas Schuddeboom and Kjell Knudde. "Hussein Amin Bicar". *Lambiek Comiclopedia* (2002).



Figure 20. Covers of *Sindbad* designed by Bernie AalmeonHussein Bicar, 1952-1960

*Samir* was a serialized comics magazine geared towards children (or more specifically their after-school allowance). *Samir* created a unique international conversation between comics that gave equal weight to European illustrations as it did to those from the Middle East. A single issue of *Samir* could take you from a local tale of Juha (a famous regional “wise-fool”) to an adventure of Tintin with the flip of a page.<sup>138</sup>

*Samir* was co-founded in 1956, by Francophone Jewish-Egyptian artist, Bernie Aalmeon and Armenian-Egyptian artist Haroon, and was published by the government-owned Dar al-Hilal in Cairo. *Samir* quickly became the most popular comics magazine in the Arab world in the 1950s and 1960s. Aalmeon created the magazine's mascot, a little Egyptian boy named “Samir”.

<sup>138</sup> Nadim Damluji. “Samir Magazine and the Art of Bootlegging Tintin.” *Tintin Travels* (2011)

Commented [45]: Maybe add:

In Burhan Karkutli's work in the 1970s, and Hilmi El-Touni's iconic book covers of the 1990s, we see the same vernacular, folkloric style  
<https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/arab-designers-bahia-shehab-haytham-nawar-new-book-legacy>

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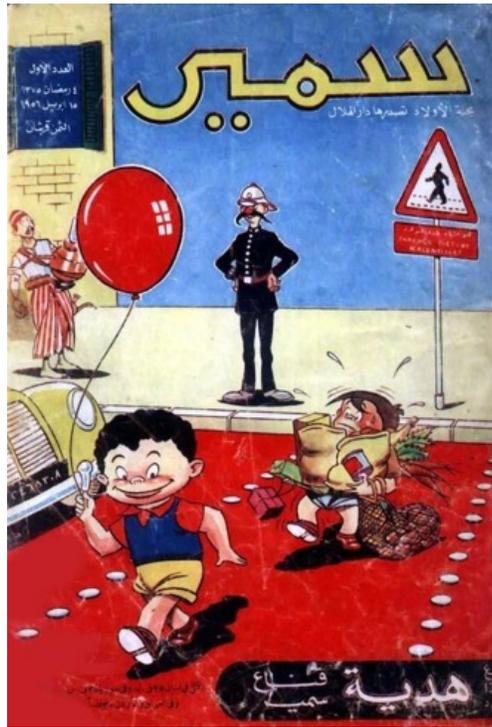


Figure 21. *The first issue of Samir (1956)*

Samir helped educate Egypt's young citizens in a nationalist mold. Most of these comics were based around heroic characters, both contemporary and traditional. Some of the recurring strips featured characters created from local contexts. Along with educating the youth, Samir would include vignettes and biographies of influential historical figures and events. Samir claimed in its tagline to be for an audience "8 to 88 years old". The magazine both published translations of European and American comics such as Alice in Wonderland and

Mickey Mouse, as well as Middle Eastern work. creator Haroon created the comics “Ib Goha and Sambo”, about the adventures of an Arab boy and his Nubian sidekick, and “Basel”, about a boy scout who battles networks of smugglers to protect Egypt’s borders. His Armenian name was “Herant”, but he used the Arab name “Haroon” for his comics. Haroon was disabled and drew most comics while sitting in a wheelchair.



Figure 23. *Ib Goha and Sambo*



The renowned Egyptian political cartoonist, Ahmed Hijjazi, joined the magazine in 1956

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creating his best-known series, 'Thnablet El Sibian' ("The Lazy Boys").

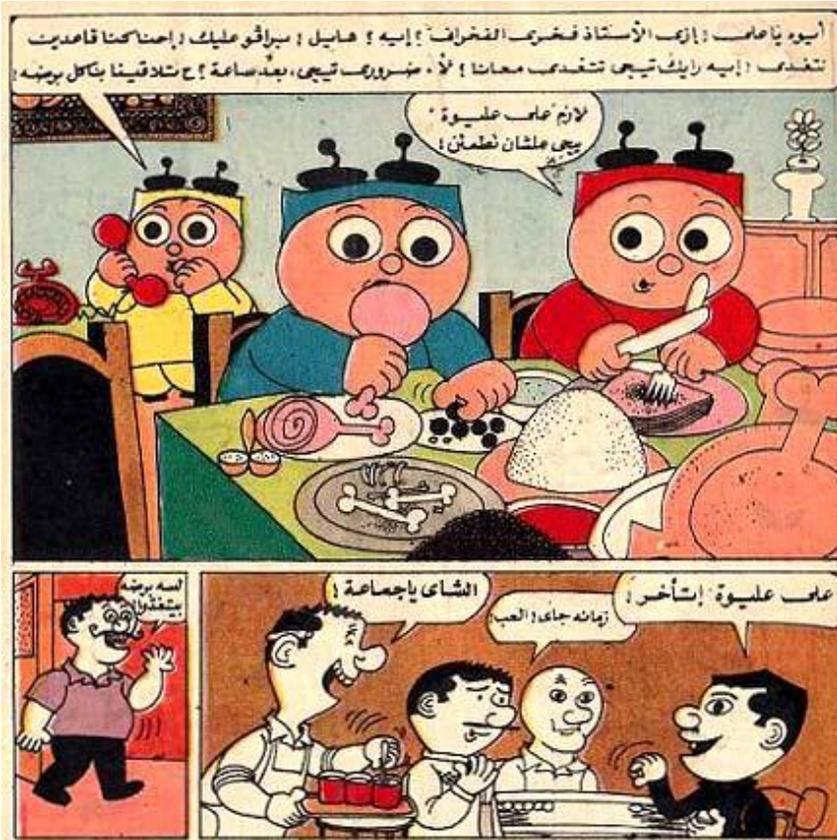


Figure 24. "Thnablet El Khorfan", Samir (1954).

He played a key role in reshaping the nature of the magazine in the 1950s and 1960s.

Hijjazi's work would often satirize Egyptian politics and Egypt's class culture, he shared many of

77

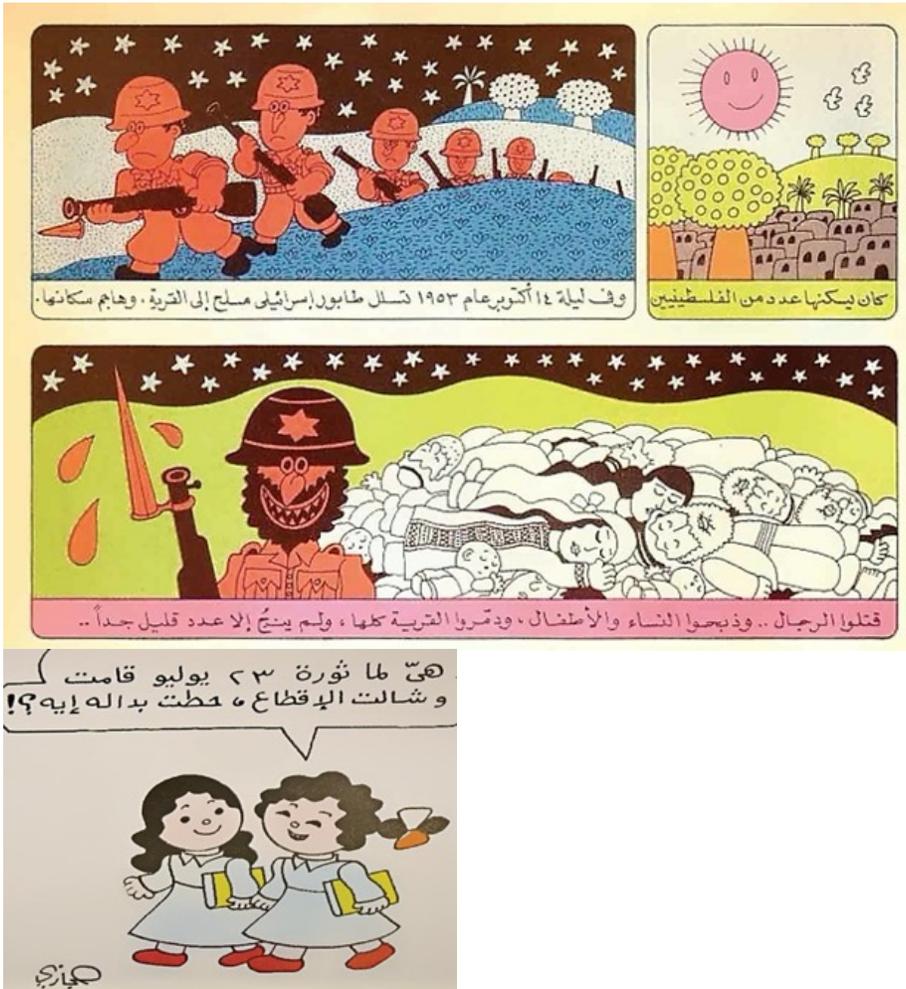
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Commented [49]: Maybe add:  
Born in Egypt, Helmi El-Touni is considered one of the Arab World's most prominent illustrators.

He strove to develop a true Arabic style of illustration, by marrying old lettering techniques, Islamic and pre-Islamic symbolism, popular culture, and a modernist-style of painting.  
[https://en.everybodywiki.com/Helmi\\_El-Touni](https://en.everybodywiki.com/Helmi_El-Touni)

the basic positions of the Egyptian Left: hostility to imperialism, suspicion of international business. But he extends his analysis to less widely accepted positions: a critique of nationalism and even patriotism.





publishing houses, instituting the virtual monopoly on culture. This state-centered approach to culture enforced the central themes of modern propaganda [in the Arab world] (...), nationalism, the opposition to imperialism, and of course, the Palestinian cause. Taking advantage of comics as this influential medium of communication and a powerful education tool, governments were quick to realize the additional potential of the medium in molding public opinion. So state-run magazines, were used or issued through the ministries of education, the ministries of culture, and, or institutions that were run by the political parties at the time.”<sup>139</sup>

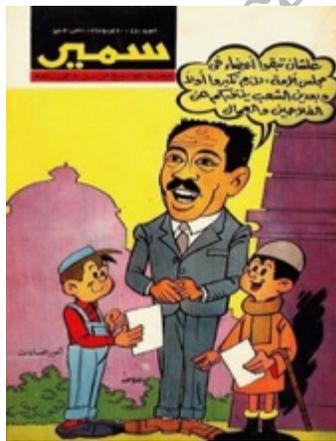


Figure 25. President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, *Samir* (1965). “In order to become members of the council of the nation you need to grow up first and then the people will elect you as representatives of the workers and the farmers.”

<sup>139</sup> Ghaibeh, Lina. “Propaganda in Comics in the Arab World: From Nationalism to Religious Radicalism”. Arab Comics: 90 Years of Popular Visual Culture Symposium. *Cogut Center for the Humanities and the Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University, and the Mu’taz and Rada Sawwaf Arabic Comics Initiative and Libraries at the American University of Beirut* (2015).



issued on 28 February 1979. The title character, Majed is a quick-witted, twelve-year-old Emirati do-gooder, who goes on many adventures in the UAE and other countries.

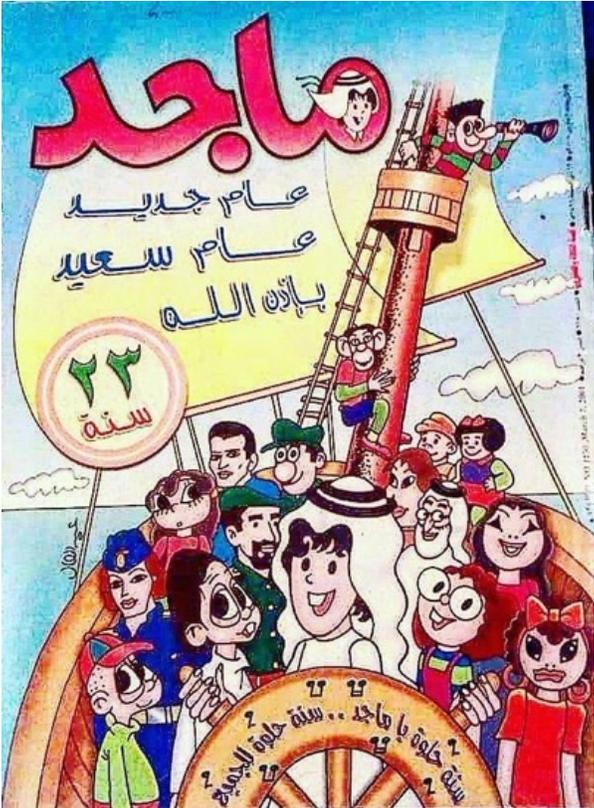


Figure 27. Majid Magazine Cover (1979) featuring its cache of original characters including “Majid” (front-center). “Zakyaa Al-Dahakiyaa” (center-right), “Kaslan Jiddan” center-left), “Captain Khalafan” (middle-left) Copyright © Majid 2021

One series in Majid is Kaslan Jiddan (كاسلان جدا lit. Very Lazy), a story of a boy named Kaslan, who tries to act like an adult and finds himself in conflicts because of it.

*Zakiyya al-Dhakiyya* (Zakiyya the Clever), published by Majid since 1979, was one of the most successful comic strips read throughout the Arab world. Zakiyya, a bespectacled, western dressed girl is a source of commentary on politics, science, general knowledge, even religion. It was revolutionary in the Arab Muslim context for such a popular authority should be both female and juvenile.<sup>143</sup>

"Captain Khalfan" is a cartoon series about the adventures of three police heroes, a sharp-witted and serious leader called "Captain Khalfan", his bumbling assistant "Fahman", and diligent Lieutenant, "Maryam".<sup>144</sup>

In 2015, Majid expanded into an animation and live-action production channel, adapting many of their original characters, including Majid, Captain Khalafan, Zakiyya, and Kaslan, into modern animated programs to reflect their Emirati and Arab identity and values for a new generation.<sup>145</sup>



"Zakiyya Al-Dahakiyaa" (left), "Captain Khalafan" (middle), "Majid" & "Kaslan Jiddan" Copyright © Majid 2021

<sup>143</sup> Francis Robinson. "The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Islamic World". Cambridge University Press (2005).

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.majid.ae/characters>

<sup>145</sup> Shounaz Meky. "Comic-book inspired 'Majid' channel kicks off in UAE".

**Commented [AH52]:** Maybe add: Majid TV was established in 2015 under Abu Dhabi Media and seeks to engage children with home-grown productions and cartoon characters such as 'Majid' and 'Kaslan'. "We have almost 15-20 original characters that have managed to sustain their weight over the years. Based on extensive research conducted directly with kids, we revamped Majid TV in February last year," Al Serkal explains.

One of the Original shows titled *Jamool* (Camel) was launched during Ramadan this year. The series is Majid's first silent animated show. Separated from his mother at birth, Jamool, the camel, goes on adventures to discover who he is. In every episode, he meets a new animal and tries to imitate it, hoping to see whether he can finally discover his true species.

Unlike other Majid IPs that feature Emirati characters such as 'Amoona' or 'Fateen', *Jamool* is a show with no cultural specs.

... [4]

**Commented [AH53]:** Maybe add: It was in 1966 that comics first appeared in Tunisia in a children's magazine: Irfane. It was entirely in Arabic, according to an article on *Africacultures* which Selmi gave me. The journal was published by the Tunisian federation of youth organizations, a state dependent institution. Then, in the 70s, 80s and 90s a number of original albums, children magazines and newspaper comics became more popular. Also, new festivals celebrating comics were launched such as the Festival of Tazarka founded in 1997, the oldest of its kind in Africa. In 2000, the very active Bouhaouala Habib organised the 'Festival méditerranéen de BD et de l'image de Tunisie' (the Mediterranean Festival of Comics and Images of Tunisia) with an exhibition of original artworks by the Italian comics artist Hugo Pratt.

Elisa Pierandrei

Last updated: June 8, 2016

In Tunisia, a new home for comics

Israeli cartoons didn't appear overtly political until the 1950s largely because the media and the government were for the most part united over the survival of the fledgling state of Israel.<sup>146</sup> The two major Zionist parties before the foundation of the State of Israel published journals for children, "Davar Leyeladim" (*A word for Children*) sponsored by Mapai (*The Workers' party of Eretz Israel*), and "Mishmar Leiyldim" (*Guard for Children*) sponsored by Mapam (*The United Workers Party*). Journals published after the foundation of the State of Israel, sponsored by liberal non-socialist parties, such as "Haaretz Shelano" (annexed to Haaretz) or "Maariv Lanoar" (published by Maariv) – both are private newspapers.<sup>147</sup>

The comic strip "Uri Muri", written by famous Israeli poet, playwright, Professor of Literature, and author of "A Flat for Rent" ("*Dira Lehaskir*") and "Miracles and Wonders" ("*Nisim VeNiflaot*"), Lea Goldberg, and illustrated by Arie Navon, was published in 1936. It's publisher *Davar L'Yeledim*, rationally decided that its content for children should generally be designed to teach them to be adults in Israel and explain who the nation's greats are.<sup>148</sup> The fact that this comic strip coined the Hebrew term "Sabra", a prickly pear as a metaphor for Jews born in Israel, suggests the medium's significant cultural influence.

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<sup>146</sup> Katz, Maya Balakirsky. "The De-Politicization of Israeli Political Cartoons". *Israel Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1, *JSTOR* (2013).

<sup>147</sup> Blich, Ben Baruch. "Israelis in the eyes of Comics." *Jerusalem, Israel: Academy of Arts and Design* (2013).

<sup>148</sup> Asaf Galay. "The Hebrew Superhero". *Hot* (2015).



Figure 17. "Uri Muri". Lea Goldberg, Arie Navon. *Davar L'Yeledim* (1937).

By contrast in the cactus became a Palestinian symbol of *samud* – resilience against oppression – after Israel's war of independence and Palestinian *Nakba*.<sup>149</sup>



Figure 18. Drawing smuggling from Israeli prison © Mohammad Sabaaneh. Source: <https://mondoweiss.net/2013/05/palestini-an-cartoonist-sabaanehs/>

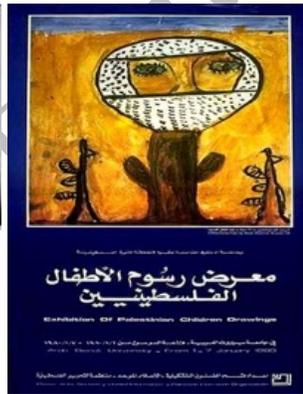


Figure 19. "A Palestinian Fighter". Translation: "On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the launching of the Palestinian revolution". Ilhram Shahrour (Age 12), student at the School of Children of Resistance in Lebanon, PLO Bureau of Unified Information, *Liberation Graphics* (1980). <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/a-palestinian-militant>.

<sup>149</sup> Kamal Boullata. "Asim Abu Shaqra: The Artist's Eye and the Cactus Tree". *Journal of Palestine Studies*; University of California Press (2001).



Figure 20. "The Cactus and Silwan" by Emad Hajjaj (Abu Mahjoob), *Al Araby* © 2021.

Over the years Uri embodied the young Israel, solving various problems that plagued the development of the State. He successfully deals with lack of housing and the need to teach Hebrew to the many waves of new immigrants, solves the need for more ships (by inflating toy ships to real size), solves the ventilation problems in the streets of Tel-Aviv, fights against the black market (by painting it white), and dries the swamps of the Hula Valley. In his last appearance in 1967, Uri flies to space.

"*Ktina HaTaza!*" (Small One the Soldier) depicts the adventures of a little boy whose only wish is to grow up. Created by Navon and Goldberg, it was the first reference to the Holocaust geared toward children in Israel and revealed the lack of information about the Holocaust and the desire to fight the Nazis.

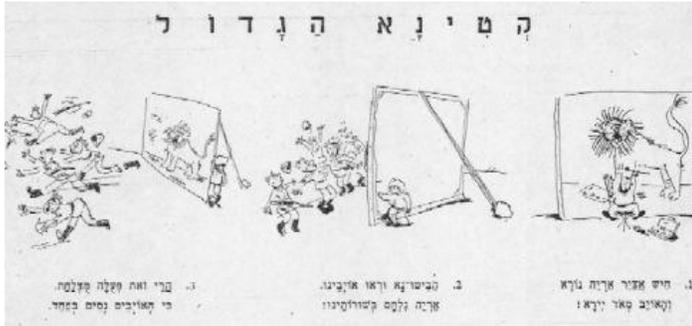


Figure 24. Ktina fighting Nazi soldiers by painting a huge lion to scare them away (1941).

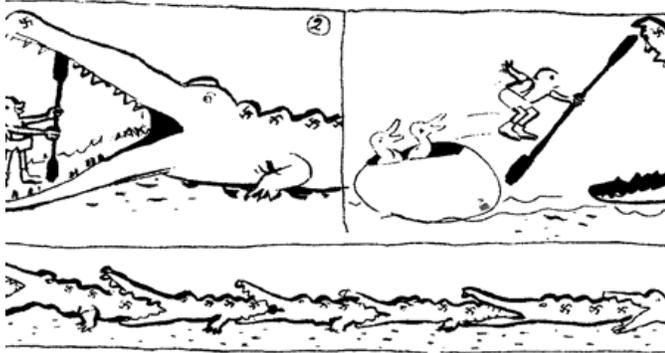


Figure 20 Ktina fights a Nazi soldier by hurling sand into his eyes (1941).

(2) סורו, סורו, נעברה  
אל ספני-ספני.  
אל קפחד, פי נופרה  
קרב ימי ונפחין.

חוקו וקרו -  
ה חנים  
ום זלב קקרו.  
ישרנים!

א פ ר ו ח ב ל ב ו



א פ ר ו ח ב ל ב ו



In this story, the chick goes on a cruise with two of his duck friends. They meet armored alligators painted with swastikas, but the confused chick defeats them by wedging his oar

between their jaws. The story echoes the battle against the Nazis but imagines a hopeful world where a small chick can vanquish the evil Nazis.

*Srulik* is a cartoon character created in 1956 by the Israeli cartoonist Kariel Gardosh, known by his pen name *Dosh*. The cartoon appeared for many years in the newspaper *Maariv* and became a symbol of what it meant to be Israeli.<sup>150</sup> *Srulik* is a pioneering Zionist, a lover of the land of Israel and its soil, a dedicated farmer who in time of need puts on a uniform and goes out to defend the state of Israel.

Many have pointed out *Srulik's* function as an antithesis of the antisemitic caricatures which appeared in *Der Stürmer* and other European and Arab journals.<sup>151</sup>



Figure 20. *Der Stürmer* (1934) Cover depicting Jews taking blood from Christian children for religious rituals.

<sup>150</sup> Joel Greenberg. "Kariel Gardosh, 79, Who Created Israeli Icon". *New York Times* (2000).

<sup>151</sup> Dr. Joel Kotek. "Major Anti-Semitic Motifs in Arab Cartoons". *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs* (2004).

In contrast the weak or cunning Jewish stereotype propagated by Joseph Goebbels, Dosh — a Holocaust survivor — drew a proud, strong, and sympathetic Jewish character with a little chutzpah. Gardosh writes, “There can be no doubt, that the brutal and systematic dehumanization of the Jew in caricatures played an important role in creating the psychological conditions for their annihilation.”<sup>152</sup> Art historian Maya Balakirsky Katz concludes that, understanding the potential of cartoons to incite hatred and violence, early Israeli cartoonists avoided overtly racist depictions of Israel’s military enemies. Additionally, Katz states, “like all journalists working during a period of mutual cooperation between the government and the Hebrew press, Gardosh was challenged to effect change on the inside without compromising national security from the outside.”<sup>153</sup>

Gidi Gezer (carrot-top Gidi) was a weekly comic series first published in 1953 about a boy who serves in the *Palmach* — a pre-IDF Jewish defense force — during the 1948 Israeli War of Independence and 1956 Suez War, fighting British and Arab soldiers using “super-hero” gifts that he gains from eating carrots.

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<sup>152</sup> Kariel Gardosh, “Political Caricature as a Reflection of Israel’s Development,” in *Jewish Humor*, ed. Avner Ziv (New Brunswick, NJ, 1998): p. 206. ‘

<sup>153</sup> Maya Balakirsky Katz. “The De-Politicization of Israeli Political Cartoons”. *Israel Studies* (2013): p. 1-30.

Over the years additional stories from this series were published including “The Convoy Continues on its Way”, where Gidi Gezer defends the convoys that carried food and supplies to a besieged Jerusalem and he fights the Arab soldiers in the war of Independence; “A Special Assignment in the Desert” where Gidi fights the Egyptians in the desert front of the war of Independence, trying to recruit the support of the Bedouins; “The Sad Class” – a story of Gidi and his sad group of classmates disappointed because they were not assigned the most dangerous mission in the battle. Lastly there was “On the Trail of El Natur”, where during the Suez crisis Gidi sets out for Gaza to pay back a debt to an Arab who Gidi’s father owes him money.<sup>154</sup>

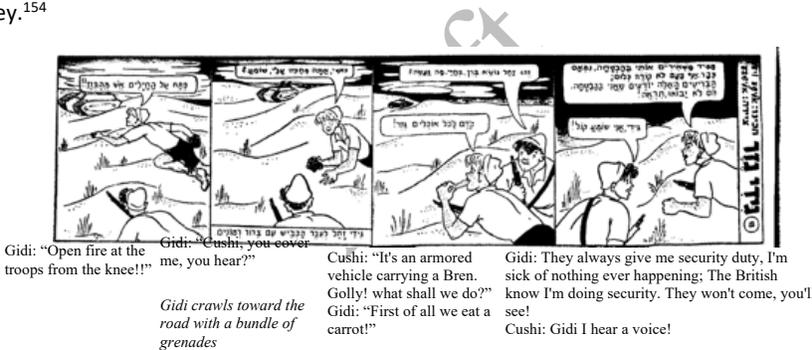


Figure 21. “Gidi Gezer”. Written by Yaacov Ashman, Illustrated by Elisheva Nadal. *Haaretz Shelanu* (1953).

“*HaRaftakoitiv shel Yoav Ben Chalav*” (“The Adventures of Yoav the Milk Boy”) published in 1960, was a comics series created for a milk commercial with a boy who gained supernatural

<sup>154</sup> Blich, Ben Baruch. “Israelis in the eyes of Comics.” *Jerusalem, Israel: Academy of Arts and Design* (2013).

powers by drinking “two glasses of pure milk a day” to defeat gangs of hoodlums, terrorists, and an evil sorcerer.



Figure 20. Yoav in action against Arab “invaders”

The first comic published in Israel was “Mickey Mahu and Eliyahu”, about a cat that accompanies a native Israeli boy on his adventures.<sup>155</sup> The name and design for “Mickey Mahu” was directly borrowed from Walt Disney’s “Mickey Mouse” (1928).



Figure 22. “Mickey Mahu and Eliyahu”. Emanuel Yaffe. *Itonenu LeKtanim* (1935).

<sup>155</sup> Blich, Ben Baruch. “Israelis in the eyes of Comics.” *Jerusalem, Israel: Academy of Arts and Design* (2013).

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In the 1940s, illustrators began “Arabizing” western comic characters such as Mickey Mouse and Tintin for Arabic readers.<sup>156</sup> Superman and *Al-Watwat* (Batman) were first published for an Arabic audience in 1964 and 1965 respectively.<sup>157</sup>

In the Arab world in the 1960s, Mickey Mouse was featured fighting in the Arab-Israeli war with an Egyptian army to liberate Palestine in comics. In the early 2000s, Al-Aqsa TV, a Hamas-affiliated Palestinian TV station, appropriated Mickey Mouse to promote martyrdom on the children’s program, “Tomorrow’s Pioneers” (*Ruwād al-Ghad*).



Figure 23. “Return to Palestine” Micki. *Dar Al-Hilal*, Egypt (1964)



Figure 24. *Tomorrow's Pioneers* snapshot, Al-Aqsa TV (2007-2009)



Figure 24. *Tomorrow's Pioneers* clip, Al-Aqsa TV (2007-2009)

<sup>156</sup> Madeleine Morley. “[Mickey Mouse in the Middle East: Discovering a New Arabic Side of the Comics Canon.](https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/mickey-mouse-in-the-middle-east-discovering-a-new-arabic-side-of-the-comics-canon/)” *AIGA Eye on Design* (2017). <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/mickey-mouse-in-the-middle-east-discovering-a-new-arabic-side-of-the-comics-canon/>

<sup>157</sup> Henry Mathews. “The Lulu As-Saghira Success Story”. *Stars of Arabic Comics*: <https://starsof arabiccomics.weebly.com/the-lulu-as-saghira-success-story.html>

“Depending on the character and the publishing house, not only was the content of the speech balloons translated but also the names were Arabicized, such as in the Arabic edition paid for by DC Comics in 1938, in which Clark Kent was called Nabil Fauzi and fell in love with Randa (Lois Lane). In another later version in 1980s Iraq, Superman wore a moustache.”<sup>158</sup> Superman was created by two Jews, Jerry Siegal and Joe Shuster. Superman is based on the biblical archetype of the story of Moses.<sup>159</sup> It’s not a coincidence that Superman’s Kryptonian name, “Kal-El”, means “Voice of God” in Hebrew nor that he escaped the destruction of his home planet in a tiny rocket ship and Moses escaped slaughter by the Egyptians in a basket.

Let’s not forget Siegel and Shuster created the first Jewish Superhero “Funnyman” in 1948.<sup>160</sup> Funnyman’s alter ego, comedian “Larry Davis”, thwarted “no-goodniks” through his clownish athleticism and pranks.<sup>161</sup>



Figure 26. *Funnyman*, Issue #1 (1948)

<sup>158</sup> Rojo, Pedro. “Arab Comics, from Pan-Arabism State Propaganda to Current Irreverence”. *European Institute of the Mediterranean and Al Fanar Foundation for Arab Knowledge* (2017): pg. 126.

<sup>159</sup> Christopher B. Zeichmann. “Champion of the Oppressed: Redescribing the Jewishness of Superman as Populist Authenticity Politics”. *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* (2017)

<sup>160</sup> [Weinstein, Simcha](#) (2006). *Up, Up, and Oy Vey!* (1st ed.). Leviathan Press.

<sup>161</sup> *Thomas Andrae and Mel Gordon*. “Siegal and Shuster’s Funnyman: The First Jewish Superhero from the Creators of Superman”. *Feral House* (2010).

Commented [54]: Maybe add that the Arab superman comics were published by a company in Egypt led by Nadia Nasha'and then transferred to Illustrated Publications led by Leila Shaheen da Cruz i.e. women had considerable control of this industry <https://starsofarabiccomics.weebly.com/preface.html>

Funnyman captures a zeitgeist of American Jewry as entertainers who had developed humor as a means of coping with persecution and not fitting in.

And also as a way of fighting back...



...Encouraging America to join the military front against Hitler's Nazi Germany.<sup>162</sup>

Jewish Americans pioneered the advent and growth of the comics industry. Many of the creators of the most famous comic books were Jewish, such as Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Joe Simon with Marvel heroes including Captain America, Spiderman, and X-Men and Bob Kane & Bill Finger with Batman. These Jewish-American men drew from personal experience, though their character outwardly reflected the white Anglo-Saxon dominant ethno-religious class of

Commented [55]: Maybe add:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gil\\_Kane](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gil_Kane)

<sup>162</sup> Katherine G. Aiken. "Superhero History: Using Comic Books to Teach U.S. History". *OAH Magazine of History* (2010): <https://www.lrhdsd.org/cms/lib05/NJ01000316/Centricity/Domain/164/superhero-study-of-history.pdf> (Accessed 10 August 2021).

20<sup>th</sup> century America to appeal to the commercial majority and at the same time promote a western idealism that every American could admire.<sup>163</sup>

In 1978, Will Eisner popularized the term “graphic novel” with the publication of his book, *A Contract with God*. He was an early contributor to the study of comics as a fine art with his book *Comics and Sequential Art* (1985). Every year, the Eisner Award recognize achievements in comics.<sup>164</sup>

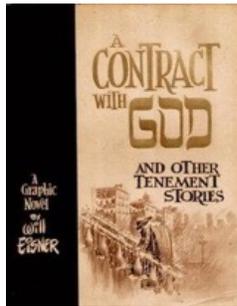


Figure 28. “*A Contract with God*”, Will Eisner © Kitchen Sink Press (1985).

This zeitgeist of Jews in Comics was captured in Michael Chabon’s *The Amazing Adventures of Cavalier and Klay*” about Joseph Kavalier, a 19-year-old Jewish refugee from Prague, and his 17-year-old cousin Sammy Clayman, who create a comic book hero at the height of World War II.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Kaplan, A., Pekar, H., & Waldman, J. (2008). *From Krakow to Krypton: Jews and Comic Books*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.

<sup>164</sup> Denis Kitchen. “Will Eisner: The Father of Graphic Novels”. *The Kansas City Public Library* (2018).

<sup>165</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Amazing\\_Adventures\\_of\\_Kavalier\\_%26\\_Clay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Amazing_Adventures_of_Kavalier_%26_Clay)



Figure 29. *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* Cover © Michael Chabon, *Random House* (2000).

According to former curator at the Israeli Cartoon Museum, Galit Gaon, “the attitude towards comics in Israel from 1936 until the late 1960s is deprecatory or disdainful.”<sup>166</sup> Early Israeli disdain for comics was generally due to both the lack of need for comic heroes when the media was already populated with real national heroes and aniconism – the absence of material representations of both the natural and supernatural worlds in various cultures, part of both Islam and Judaism – and because religious communities didn’t need new stories because they already had the stories of the Torah.<sup>167</sup> This lack of need for comic super heroes partially explains the short lived series of Uri Fink’s “SabraMan” (1978) and Michael Netzer’s “Uri-On” (1987), both patriotic defenders of Israel.

<sup>166</sup> Gaon, Galit. “The Hebrew Superhero”. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/webcast-7291/>.

<sup>167</sup> Nimrod Reshef, Keren Katz, Alina Gorban, and Karen Green. “Israeli Comics Today”. *Society of Illustrators* (2014).



Figure 28. *Sabraman* (1978) © Uri Fink



Figure 29. *Uri-On #1* (1987) © Michael Netzer

It also explains the rise of the “anti-hero” in Israeli comics such as Nimrod Reshef’s *Tel Aviv noire*, *Uzi: An Urban Legend*, and Dorit Maya-Gur’s bestselling *Falafel Man*, about a chubby, redheaded superhero who shoots sizzling falafel balls at his enemies.<sup>168</sup>



Figure 32. *Uzi: An Urban Legend* (2005-2009) © Nimrod Reshef Figure 33. *Falafel Man* (2006) © Dorit Maya-Gur

Like many other elements of Israeli popular culture (like Israeli pop music) (at least until 2010), Israel’s underground comics scene got started about a decade after “comix” had made

<sup>168</sup> Asaf Galay. “The Hebrew Superhero”. *Hot* (2015).

waves in the US and Europe. The neurosis bubbling under the surface of Israeli society found an outlet in comix and an audience for content critical of society and government and subversive of mainstream culture.<sup>169</sup> Examples include Daniela Deckel London's *Hamudi* in 1999, which satirizes the narcissism of small children, Zeev Engelmayer's promiscuous existentialist, *Soshke* (1998),



Figure 30. *Hamudi* (1999) © Daniela Deckel London



Figure 31. *Soshke* © Zeev Engelmayer (1998)

and Uri Fink's ongoing 1987 comics turned 1998. animated series, "*Zbeng!*" about teenagers in a nihilistic reality of classrooms, gossip, sex, food, and a general lack of values.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Rachel Neiman. "Underground Comix Surface in Holon". *Israel21c* (2013): <https://www.israel21c.org/underground-comix-surface-in-holon/> (Accessed 28 July 2021).

<sup>170</sup> Rachel Neiman. "Underground Comix Surface in Holon: Three decades of political, social and economic change as illustrated through Israel's underground comics scene are the subject of an exhibition and symposium." *Israel21c* (2013): <https://www.israel21c.org/underground-comix-surface-in-holon/> (Accessed 6 August 2021).

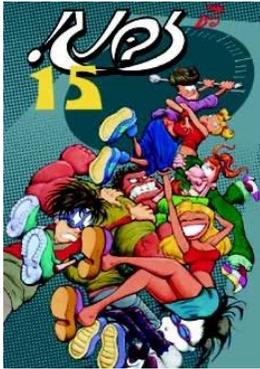


Figure 30. *Zbeng!* Cover (1987)  
© Uri Fink

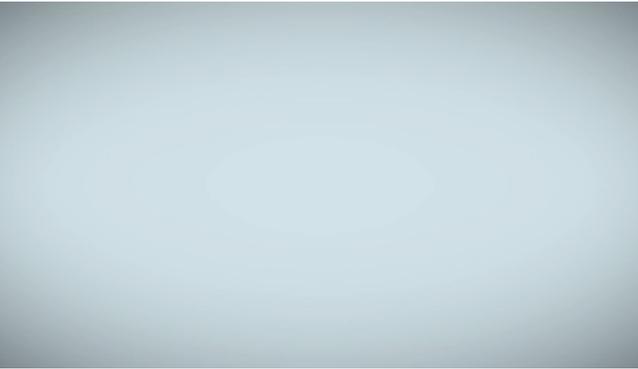


Figure 30. *ZBENG!* Animation short by Etty Namer & Matan Kuzikaro (2013)  
© Uri Fink

The influence of cartoons in Middle Eastern society can also be seen in patterns of radical reactions to them. Cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed led to 2005 *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad Cartoon Crisis mass protests in Denmark and across the Muslim world, some escalating into violent riots. In 2015, cartoons depicting Mohammad led to the murder of 12 artists at the satirical weekly newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris. Ali Ferzat, an award-winning Syrian cartoonist, was first published at age twelve on the front pages of newspaper *al-Ayyam*, shortly before it was banned by the Baath party.<sup>171</sup> His 1989 exhibition of cartoons brought a threat on his life from Saddam Hussein and a ban from Iraq, Jordan, and Libya, for such controversial works as "The General and the Decorations".<sup>172</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Michael Netzer. "Ferzat in the Lion's Den". *Michaelnetzer.com* (2011).  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20111220113601/http://michaelnetzer.com/mnop/?p=3968>

<sup>172</sup> "Censorship & Persecution". *Arab Comix Project; Humboldt State University* (2012).

Commented [56]: Maybe add:

Bosch Fawstin is an American cartoonist.[1] He was born into a Muslim family from Albania and raised in the faith before leaving it in his teens, becoming an atheist. His work is about salafism, wahabism, and the renouncing of faith.

His first graphic novel, *Table for One*, was nominated for a Russ Manning Most Promising Newcomer award in 2004[2] and an Eisner award - Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition in 2005.[3] He is currently producing *The Infidel*, featuring Pigman. In 2015, he won a controversial contest advertised as the "First Annual Muhammad Art Exhibit and Contest".[4]

Also:

*Jesus and Mo* is a British webcomic created by an artist using the pseudonym Mohammed Jones. Launched in November 2005, the comic is published on its eponymous website once a week

*Jesus and Mo* share a flat[2] (and a bed), and occasionally venture outside, principally to a public house, *The Cock and Bull*, where they drink Guinness and engage in conversation and debate with an atheist female bartender known simply as *Barnmaid*, who is never drawn[3] but is characterised only as an out-of-frame speech bubble. The barnmaid functions as the voice of reason when criticising the Abrahamic religions or religion in general. Other times, *Jesus* or *Mo* may act as the voice of reason depending on which religion a particular comic aims to criticise. *Jesus* will act as the author's mouthpiece if the comic aims to criticise Islam while the character *Mo* will be used to criticise Christianity

*Jesus & Mo* (the characters) are absurd, blinkered, and oddly very sweet. *J&M* (the cartoon) is brilliant: sharp, delicious, irresistible.  
Salman Rushdie

*Jesus and Mo* cartoons are wonderfully funny and true.  
Richard Dawkins

<http://www.jesusandmo.net/>

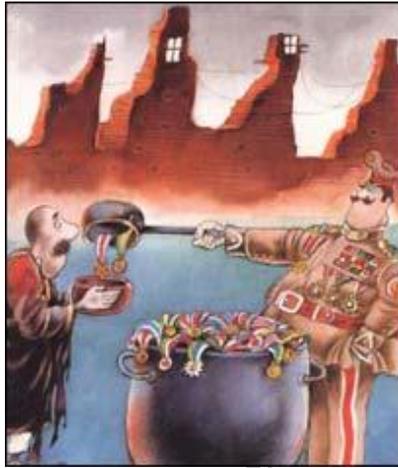


Figure 35. Ali Ferzat “The General and the Decorations” (1989).

In 2011, Ali Farzat’s hands were broken by masked thugs on account of his critical caricatures of Syrian dictator Bashar Al-Assad.<sup>173</sup> In Algeria, cartoonist Abdelhamid Amine, known by the penname “Nime”, was arrested on November 26, 2019, and sentenced to one year in prison for “insulting” figures of the state, though he was released on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

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<sup>173</sup> Sebastian Usher. “Syria unrest: Famed cartoonist Ali Ferzat 'beaten'”. *BBC* (2011). <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14665113>



Figure 36. "Cinderella" © Nime – Depicts the five candidates to the 2019 Algerian presidential election with Chief of Staff Ahmed Gaïd Salah putting on shoes on the foot of Abdelmajid Tebboune.



Figure 37. "Free Nime" © Pierre Ballouhey, France, *PoliticalCartoons.com*  
<https://politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/232473>

In 2014, Majda Shaheen was awarded Cartoonist Rights Network International Courage Award for her cartoons depicting her critical perception of the realities in Gaza and the region, specifically for a cartoon she drew illustrating the relationship between the Head of the Ruling Authority in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas, and the Al-Quds brigades (depicted as a dog).<sup>174</sup>

<sup>174</sup> "Backlash against a Cartoon for Palestinian Female Cartoonist". *Arab Cartoon House* (2014).  
<http://arabcartoon.net/en/news/backlash-against-cartoon-palestinian-female-cartoonist>



Figure 38. Cartoon by Majda Shaheen

Unable to travel to the United States to accept the award, Shaheen wrote: “Despite all the obstacles and challenges put in my way, I still believe in the influence of art on society and culture, even when that influence might be undetected. It is essential for me to express myself as a woman and as a Palestinian living in Gaza, a place where opinions like mine are rarely heard and are not given the opportunity to be broadly communicated. Our political leaders willingly choose to ignore or silence voices that do not match their agenda. Revolutions begin from the simple people, who raise their voices to speak for themselves and represent the silent majority.”<sup>175</sup> She disappeared in 2018, a funeral was held in her honor.<sup>176, 177</sup>

In discussing censorship and persecution of Middle Eastern artists, it is important to address the unique problems faced by female artists regardless of if they are fighting gendered oppression or simply creating aesthetic art. In traditional patriarchal countries, women often

<sup>175</sup> “Majda Shaheen: Courage Award Acceptance Remarks”. *Cartoonists Rights Network International* (2014). <https://cartoonistsrights.org/acceptance-remarks-from-majda-shaheen/>

<sup>176</sup> Tjeerd Royaards. “[The difficulty with drawing about Israel and Palestine](#)”. *Cartoon Movement* (2021).

<sup>177</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/MajdaShaheenCaricatures>

face a lack of opportunities, meaning that their careers are limited and censored before they can even begin.<sup>178</sup>

The list goes on.

And on.

And then unfortunately keeps going.

In 2012, Belgian Israeli Cartoonist Michel Kichka attributed a decline in the production of political cartoons to rise in political correctness leading to more self-censorship among western publishers, transition to freelance and agencies rather than hiring staff cartoonists, and shift in consumer desire for moving images in an increasingly flooded, fast-paced age of information.<sup>179</sup> Since then, "Internet memes" have emerged as the next evolution of the political cartoon. Not everyone can draw a cartoon, but almost anyone can make a meme.<sup>180</sup> Despite the virality of internet memes and decline of the editorial cartoons in the West, Arab cartoons have maintained significance.



Figure 39. Collage of viral memes

<sup>178</sup> "Censorship & Persecution". *Arab Comix Project; Humboldt State University* (2012).

<sup>179</sup> Michel Kichka. "Cartooning the Conflict". *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem* (2012) <http://journals.openedition.org/bcrfj/6877>

<sup>180</sup> Martin La Monica. "Political cartoonists are out of touch – it's time to make way for memes". *The Conversation* (2019).

**Commented [AH57]:** Maybe Add P is for Palestine and Free Library Censorship of Rifk Ebeid whose children's book "Baba What Does My Name Mean?" <https://palestinepod.podbean.com/e/free-library-censors-palestinian-children-s-book-with-rifk-ebeid/>

**Commented [58]:** Add:

Dear honored guests,  
My name is Majda Shaheen, I am a Palestinian residing in a short strip of land called the Gaza Strip. As you all probably know, our current situation is exceedingly difficult in light of the last war we experienced. It is still unclear what the upcoming days will bring, but I hope with all my heart that we will succeed in obtaining true peace, so that my children and all the Palestinian people will be privileged to live a good and ordinary life.  
It is a great honor to accept this wonderful award from the Cartoonists' Rights Network International. Unfortunately, I am not able to attend this ceremony or fly to the United States of America, a country that only in my sweetest dreams am I able to witness its wonders.  
The importance of art in my life has nothing to compare, in its intensity. From the moment I first experienced the beauty of art my life was changed. It is not a simple matter for a woman like me to express my opinions with such clarity, particularly when these opinions don't coincide with those of the current rulers, The Hamas movement.  
Cartoons are the instrument which I use to express ... [5]

**Commented [59]:** Maybe add:

Ahmed Naji | أحمد ناجي,  
Naji's graphic novel *Using Life* is about protagonist filmmaker Bassam Bahgat, who after being asked to create a documentary about urban planning and architecture in Cairo, discovers a network of underground conspiracies run by his employers. Two years after the novel's 2014 release, a reader reported an extract of the text to the government for "harm[ing] public morality"; Naji was sentenced to ... [6]

**Commented [60]:** Maybe add editorial and political cartoons on the decline due to the rise in political correctness, transition to freelance rather than staff cartoonists, and

**Commented [61]:** Maybe add: Zehra Doğan (born April 14, 1989) is a Kurdish artist and journalist and author from Diyarbakır, Turkey. In 2017, she was sentenced to 2 years, 9 months and 22 days in prison for "terrorist propaganda" because of her news coverage, social media posts, and sharing a painting of hers on social media.[2] Her painting depicts the destruction of the Nusaybin, town in southeastern Turkey, after the clashes between state security forces and Kurdish insurgents. After she finished her sentence, she w ... [7]

Comics were used to facilitate reconciliation in the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide.<sup>181</sup> *Smile through the Tears*, created by Tutsi survivor Rupert Bazambanza, depicts the story of the Rwanga family.<sup>182</sup> *Smile through the Tears* helped develop understanding of core issues of genocide and the legal framework of reconciliation.<sup>183</sup>

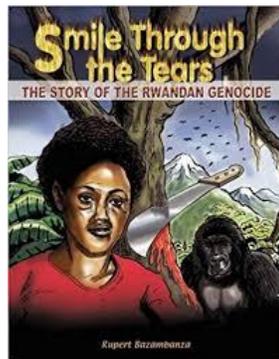


Figure 40. *Smile Through the Tears*. © Rupert Bazambanza (2005)

NGOs “Search for Common Ground” (SFCG), “World Comics”, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) have used comics to promote conflict mediation and social progress in dozens of countries including South Sudan, Lebanon, and Pakistan.<sup>184, 185, 186</sup>

<sup>181</sup> Yamson, Ellen; Yamshon, Daniel. “Comics Media in Conflict Resolution Programs”. *Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Negotiation Law Review* (2006): p. 2, 8.

<sup>182</sup> Laurike in 't Veld. “The Representation of Genocide in Graphic Novels”. *Palgrave Macmillan* (2019).

<sup>183</sup> Clotilde Pégurier. “Law, Literature and Genocide: Rupert Bazambanza’s *Smile Through the Tears*”. *Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston* (2019).

<sup>184</sup> Michel, Chantal Catherine. “Panels for Peace: Contributions of Israeli and Palestinian Comics to Peace-Building”. *Milan, Italy: Journal of Fondazione CDEC* (2013).

<sup>185</sup> <https://www.sfcg.org/tag/comic-books/>

<sup>186</sup> Maggie Silver, Bob Hobbs, Alissa Eckert, and Mark Connor. “Preparedness 101: Zombie Pandemic”. *Center for Disease Control* (2011).

JustVision is a nonprofit organization led by Suhad Babaa and Julia Bacha and founded by Ronit Avni, that uses storytelling to highlight Palestinian and Israeli grassroots leaders working to help “end the occupation”. JustVision produced “Budrus”, a documentary that tells the story of a nonviolent campaign that was able to save the village of Budrus, through the eyes of 15-year-old Iltezam Morrar. *Budrus* was adapted into a graphic novel by Irene Nasser to highlight issues shown in the movie and make it more accessible to children.<sup>187</sup>

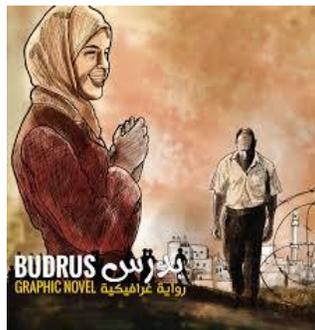


Figure 41. “Budrus” Graphic Novel © JustVision.

Between 1998 and 2000 a combined Hebrew-Arabic version of Sesame Street broadcast on local Israeli and Palestinian stations in order to generate a message of coexistence.<sup>188</sup> A study of 275 Israeli-Jewish, Palestinian-Israeli, and Palestinian preschoolers on the effects of viewing “Rechov Sumsum/Shara’a Simsim”, showed that although some of the children had negative conceptions about adult Arabs and Jews, children, on the whole, did not invoke these

<sup>187</sup> Dalia Hatuqa. “Palestinian Non-Violence Subject of New Graphic Novel.” *Al-Monitor* (2013). <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/05/budrus-graphic-novel-palestinian-non-violence.html#ixzz6eSvJonZx>

<sup>188</sup> Daoud Kuttab. “Sesame Street, Palestine”. *BearManor Media* (2018).

stereotypes when evaluating peer conflict situations between Israeli and Palestinian children. Exposure to the program was linked to an increase in children's use of both prosocial justifications to resolve conflicts and positive attributes to describe members of the other group. Palestinian children's abilities to identify symbols of their own culture increased over time. The results indicate the effectiveness of media-based interventions such as Rechov Sumsum/Shara'a Sumsim on countering negative stereotypes by building a peer-oriented context that introduces children to the everyday lives of people from different cultures.<sup>189</sup>



Figure 42. *Rechov Sumsum/Shara'a Sumsim*, © Sesame Workshop (1998-2000)



**Commented [62]:** Maybe add a fact about how Sesame Street has been adapted to over \_\_\_ countries, including \_\_\_ Arab programs among them a Sesame Street Dedicated to Syrian Refugees eluding back to the adaption of Shadow puppet theatre in the Ottoman empire and the memetic spread of culture, particular

**Commented [AH63]:** Maybe I should add something about how the *Shara simsim-rechov sumsum* crossover missed the mark in terms of dealing with substantive issues of conflict and they were supposed to produce around 10 episodes but could only agree to 3 and that there were plenty of production issues along the way.

Could link this to understanding the pitfalls of other Israeli-Palestinian creative collaborations such as: <https://www.ipost.com/diaspora/palestinian-cast-back-out-of-play-about-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict-687482> To understand pitfalls and how to avoid them

<sup>189</sup> Charlotte F. Cole, Cairo Ararat, Chava Tidhar, Wafa Zidan Tafesh, Nathan A. Fox, Melanie Killen, Alicia Ardila-Rey, Lewis A. Leavitt, Gerry Lesser, Beth A. Richman and Fiona Yung. "The Educational Impact of Rechov Sumsum/Shara'a Sumsim." *International Journal of Behavioral Development* (2003).

The first animation to originate from the middle east was “The Adventures of Gadi Ben Sussi” in 1931 by Ariel Navon. A story about, a young Yemenite-Jewish boy wanders the streets of Tel Aviv. He tries his hand at a string of jobs but doesn’t last long at any of them. He looks for love and finds it, but only after many trials and tribulations, including floating above 1930s Tel Aviv while clutching hold of a cluster of balloons.<sup>190</sup>



Figure 43. “The Adventures of Gadi Ben Sussi” by Ariel Navon (1931): [https://youtu.be/D1o\\_OOgw39k](https://youtu.be/D1o_OOgw39k).

The first publicly screened animation to originate from the Middle East was “Mish Mish Effendi” in 1940. It was created by the Jewish Frenkel brothers in Egypt, originally from Russia, who settled in Jaffa, Palestine, and were deported to Alexandria by the Ottoman Empire out of false suspicion. Their cartoons, inspired largely by Waltz Disney, the Fleischer Brothers, and al-

<sup>190</sup> Amit Noar. “The Story of the First Hebrew Animated Film”. *The National Library of Israel* (2020): [https://blog.nli.org.il/en/hoi\\_hebrew-animated/](https://blog.nli.org.il/en/hoi_hebrew-animated/); [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1o\\_OOgw39k&ab\\_channel=HebrewUniversityofJerusalem](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1o_OOgw39k&ab_channel=HebrewUniversityofJerusalem)

Commented [64]: The first Israeli animation 1931 Ariel Navon  
The Adventures of Gadi Ben Sussi  
[https://blog.nli.org.il/en/hoi\\_hebrew-animated/](https://blog.nli.org.il/en/hoi_hebrew-animated/)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1o\\_OOgw39k&ab\\_channel=HebrewUniversityofJerusalem](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1o_OOgw39k&ab_channel=HebrewUniversityofJerusalem)

Commented [65]: Alexander Saroukhan fatma  
al-Masri Effendi – a caricatured type, who first appeared in 1930 in the pages of the Egyptian satirical journal tRuz al-Yusuf. Use of this ‘everyman’ character mushroomed in the interwar period in Egypt, as al-Masri Effendi not only tapped into the themes of the journals in which he appeared, and was built on the preoccupations of his cartoonist creators, but also came to represent the stereotypical Egyptian and embodiment of the nation (in the context of a modernity developing alongside a continued struggle with British colonial rule). Yet his utility also saw al-Masri Effendi become a site of contestation, over the supposed Egyptian character and the nature of Egyptianness (relating to issues of class, race, and gender).

Satiric imagery in the Interwar Egyptian press (1919-1936) reflects the interactions between the semi-colonial hegemony and the emerging Egyptian national self-image, within the context of Egypt’s transition from an Ottoman vilayet to a nation-state. The satirical images (caricatures, cartoons and illustrations) represented and expressed the discourses engaging with the roles of the two political cultures – Egyptian and European – contending for hegemony over the nature of the new Egyptian national culture. These images mapped the changing human and urban fabric, disseminated and instilled its symbols whereby the local modern community could interpret their changing reality. The caricatured image of al-Masri Effendi, a middle aged man in a western suit, wearing a Turkish fez, holding prayer beads in his hand, first appeared in the Egyptian satirical press in late 1920s. This image, whose visual sources were derived from both the local visual repertoire and Western satirical templates (European and American), initially served as the voice of the reading public. By analyzing the satirical imagery from the prominent Interwar Egyptian satirical periodicals (al-Kashkul, Ruz al-Yusuf and Akher Sa’a), I seek to show how throughout the 1930s, al-Masri Effendi, often presented in research as a pitiful bureaucrat, came to be the reflection of the emerging Egyptian middle class or the modern Egyptian public, a sort of an “ideal citizen”, bearing the national mission. Thus al-Masri Effendi embodied the notion of a modern national identity, “the true Egyptian”. His satirical image reveals a process of cultural transfer, one that was essential to the emergence of the Egyptian middle class, while seeking to define and shape its national identity and culture.

Masri Effendi, became widely popular in Egypt, until the Frenkel brothers faced censorship and discrimination as Jews in the wake of the 1952 Egyptian Revolution. They fled to France where they continued making animations.<sup>191, 192</sup> Between 1937 and 1950, the Frenkels produced nine episodes of Mish Mish Effendi and several cinema commercials. Mish Mish Effendi inspired a whole generation of animators, Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike.<sup>193</sup>

Commented [66]: Could segue from the Russian-Jewish origins of the Frenkel brothers to the Jews of Russian Animation



Figure 40. The Frenkel Brothers' *Mish Mish Effendi* Clip Compilation (1940).

Mish-Mish Effendi is described as the Egyptian Mickey Mouse, but their cartoons are much more reminiscent of their Jewish-American counterparts.<sup>194</sup> The Fleischer brothers, Walt

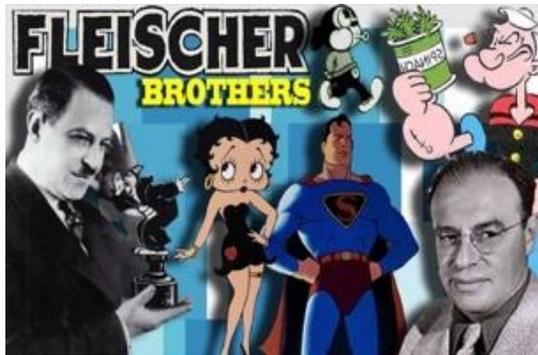
<sup>191</sup> Ushi Derman. "'Mickey Mouse' got an Egyptian brother; First Frenkel Brothers animated film". *Historical Society of Jews from Egypt* (2005).

<sup>192</sup> Tal Michael. "Bukra Fil Mish Mish". *Cassis Films* (2019).

<sup>193</sup> Omar Sayfo. "Minorities and Egyptian Cartoons". *Woolf Institute* (January 28, 2016): <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/blog/minorities-and-egyptian-cartoons>

<sup>194</sup> David Rolland. "2021 Miami Jewish Film Festival". *Jitney Books* (2021).

Disney's top competitors, pioneered "Koko the Clown", "Popeye", "Betty Boop", and the first animated Superman series.



The Fleischer Brothers and their creations

Jews have been accused of controlling the media dating back to an anti-Jewish campaign waged in the 1920s by the Dearborn Independent, a publication backed by industrialist Henry Ford Sr, based on the notorious and fraudulent book, The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.<sup>195</sup> "If Jews control the media, why don't we give ourselves better press?" — Jon Stewart. This perception stems in part from Jewish dominance in Hollywood which is largely attributed to confluence of the inception of the motion picture industry during the third and largest wave of Jewish immigrants to the United States between 1880 and 1924, the prohibition of Jews from professional guilds and universities by the elite, and the general trend of lower classes and new

<sup>195</sup> Alleged Jewish 'Control' of the American Motion Picture Industry. *Anti-Defamation League* (1999): <https://www.adl.org/news/article/alleged-jewish-control-of-the-american-motion-picture-industry><https://www.adl.org/news/article/alleged-jewish-control-of-the-american-motion-picture-industry><https://www.adl.org/news/article/alleged-jewish-control-of-the-american-motion-picture-industry>

**Commented [67]:** Maybe discuss how Jews were excluded from many professions and guild, jewish entertainers, who'd they steal it from created Hollywood...  
 Milt gross  
 Joe Kubert  
 - Kubert, Joe. The Adventures of Yaacov & Isaac. Mahrwood Press (distributed in the U.S. by Feldheim Publishers), 2004. Kubert's stories about two young brothers impart Torah values and Jewish history lessons in an exciting action-adventure comic book style that is likely to appeal to elementary school boys ages 10 and up.  
 - Kubert, Joe. Yossel, April 19, 1943: A Story of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. ibooks, 2003. Kubert imagines what his life would have been like had his parents not left Europe before the Holocaust. His namesake, Yossel, chronicles his time in the Warsaw Ghetto by illustrating the life and death around him.  
 - Kleid, Neil and Jake Allen. Brownsville. ComicsLit, 2006.  
 Kubert, Joe. Jew Gangster. ibooks, 2005. These two graphic novels shed light on a relatively unknown period of time in Jewish history, when Jewish gangsters violently ruled the streets.

Margarette winkler  
 Herblock  
 Al Hirschfeld  
 David Levine  
 Mad Magazine  
 Hanoch Piven  
 Joseph Bau  
 Rube Goldberg  
 Maurice Sendak  
 Shel Silverstein  
 Sault Steinberg  
 Margret and H. A. Rey- Curious George  
 Eric Goldberg – Disney Animator

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immigrants to pursue success in entertainment because of the lack of barriers to entry.<sup>196, 197</sup>

“One of the main reasons Jews have done so well in the entertainment field is due to their relationship with storytelling. It includes a feeling for emotional storytelling, what we would say has schmaltz, it makes you cry, it makes you laugh. That kind of storytelling is part of Jewish tradition.”<sup>198</sup> Jews are responsible for the best-selling, most widely distributed story on earth, the bible.

Starting from the late 1930s, Egyptian artists produced short, culturally relevant animations. Egypt was the first Arab country to introduce higher education in art. The School of Fine Arts (Madrasa al-Funun al-Jamilah), established in 1908, was later reorganized and followed by other state-sponsored institutions. An animation unit was founded at Egyptian Television in 1961. Due to the high costs of technical equipment for celluloid production, the vast majority of practicing Egyptian animators, such as Antoine Selim (b. 1910), Samee' Rafe', Zakariyya Ajlan, Mohamed Haseeb, Mustafa Hussein (b. 1935), Muhammad Hakem (b. 1929), Ali Moheb (b. 1935) and Noshi Iskander (b. 1938), could only work if they were well integrated into local academic and/or media hierarchies - a situation that persisted until the late 1990s. Although most animation were commercials, commissioned by cinema or television, some animators also

Commented [AH68]: Find animations by these people for presentation and for memetic data to potentially inform style/content of “Shira and Amal”

<sup>196</sup> Jennifer Caplan. American Jewish Humor. Religion 278. Wesleyan University (Spring 2017): [https://owaprod-pub.wesleyan.edu/reg/lwesmaps\\_page.html?stuid=&facid=NONE&crse=014448&term=1211](https://owaprod-pub.wesleyan.edu/reg/lwesmaps_page.html?stuid=&facid=NONE&crse=014448&term=1211)

<sup>197</sup> Joellyn Zollman. “Jewish Immigration to America: Three Waves: Sephardic, German, and Eastern European immigrants each contributed to the formation of American Jewry.” *My Jewish Learning*: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/jewish-immigration-to-america-three-waves/>

<sup>198</sup> Robert Sarner. “Jewish media mogul exercises ‘world domination through animation’: Michael Hirsh, children’s television magnate and son of Holocaust survivors, credits his success to a simple motto: ‘Don’t look down’”. *The Times of Israel* (2017): <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-media-mogul-exercises-world-domination-through-animation/>

managed to produce their own short stories. After the presidency of Gamal Abdel-Nasser ended in 1970, animation production declined.<sup>199</sup>

From the 1960s, several Algerian (Mohamed Aram, Mohamed Mazari, Menouar Merabtene, et al) and Tunisian (Amor Ben Mahmoud, Mongi Sancho, Zouhair Mahjoub, et al) animators working in national television industries produced short animations. But the number remained low because institutional support was lacking, and circulation was limited to local screens and film festivals. From the introduction of terrestrial television broadcasting in Arab countries in the mid-1950s,<sup>3</sup> to the arrival of satellite television in the 1990s, Arab television was almost exclusively run by government institutions and penetration of television content was largely confined within national borders, meaning that Arab Animation between Business and Politics local media authorities and censors could act as gatekeepers. As the local animation was extremely rare, television slots dedicated to children were dominated by cheap, locally produced live content, and dubbed foreign animations. Choosing the sources of imports during the Cold War era was often a political decision. Socialist Arab countries such as Syria, Libya and Iraq preferred products from France and the Eastern bloc, while Gulf countries tended to import from the US. However, certain animations, such as *Tom and Jerry*, circulated regardless of political orientation, and there was also admiration for Japanese anime across the entire Arab world. While a number of Arab state-run channels established their own dubbing departments, traditional and new regional centers of cultural production such as Egypt and Syria began to distribute foreign animated content dubbed into literary Arabic to other markets, and hence

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<sup>199</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod, *Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 135.

became gatekeepers not only on the national, but, to a certain extent, also on the regional level.<sup>200</sup> Under the presidency of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1956, Television became a fundamental part for the production of national culture in Egypt. This resulted, an entire generation of Egyptian Animators, who dedicated their talents to making educational pieces and commercials of goods produced by President Nasser's socialist-type industries, targeting the animation to everyone. Nasser's death in 1970 resulted in the decline of Egyptian animation.

Although computer-generated imagery (CGI) was introduced in the US and Europe in the 1960s, it did not reach the Arab world until the late 1980s. CGI productions use computers to draw and color the frames instead of the human hand, but overall, the technology remained expensive and labor-intensive. Wells notes that dominant visual styles of animated cartoons generally recall figurative illustration traditions of the country of origin.<sup>201</sup> That Arab artists showed limited interest in producing animated cartoons can likely be attributed to the fact that the decorative and illustrative arts in the Arab world were largely dominated by non-figurative decoration (mosaic, calligraphy), avoiding figurative illustration. No CGI studios were established in the Arab world until the late 1980s. In the case of early CGI technology, it was difficult to separate the creative tasks from the technical and mechanical ones.<sup>202</sup> Because communication was slow and production costly, constant personal supervision was needed

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<sup>200</sup> Omar Adam Sayfo. "Arab Animation between Business and Politics". In book: Children's Television and Digital Media in the Arab World. Publisher: I.B. Tauris Editors: Naomi Sakr and Jeanette Steemers (28 July 2017).

<sup>201</sup> Paul Wells, *Animation Genre and Authorship* (London: Wallflower Press, 2002), p. 3.

<sup>202</sup> Ted Tschang, "Production and political economy in the animation industry: Why insourcing and outsourcing occur: a paper presented at the DRUID Summer Conference 2004 on Industrial Dynamics, Innovation and Development, Elsinore, Denmark, 14-16 June, 2004.

from authors to make the animation process efficient. In response, some Arab animation producers moved the entire production process to technically more advanced countries, and often also travelled there themselves to keep control over the texts. This was the case with Al-Amirah wal-Nahr ('The Princess and the River'), a propagandistic Iraqi feature-length production produced in 1982 by Babylon, a production company established in 1980, under director Faissal al-Yasseri. While scriptwriting and dubbing was performed in Iraq, the entire production process was moved to East Germany and the scenario was written by an Australian expert.<sup>203</sup>



Figure 40. “Al-Amirah wal-Nahr” (‘The Princess and the River’) (1980).

Another example is represented by the pioneer works of the so-called “Islamic Animation (*Cartoun Islamiyy*), a special genre produced mainly by religious foundations from

<sup>203</sup> Omar Adam Sayfo. “Arab Animation between Business and Politics”. In book: Children’s Television and Digital Media in the Arab World. Publisher: I.B. Tauris Editors: Naomi Sakr and Jeanette Steemers (28 July 2017).

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. The pioneer producer of the genre, a Saudi company called Ella, moved the production of its early feature-length films to Turkey, where Muassasat Alla lil-Intag al Fanniyy wal-Tawzi' (The Alla Institution for Art Production and Distribution), now known as "OKToons", had been established in 1992 by Saudi businessman Osama Khalifa. The company made several feature-length animation productions on historical and Islamic topics, amongst them Muhammad al-Fatih (1995), Rihlat al-Khuloud (1996), Asad Ayn Jalout (1998) and Tareq ibn-Ziyad (1999).<sup>204</sup>

**Etana** Production produced multiple impressive 2D animated adult comedy series. One of their most famous production is the Al-Attag for Al-Sharqiya TV, Iraq's first animation series. Directed by Muhaned Abu Humra, with executive producer by Ali Abu Khumra, *Al-Attag* follows the adventure of Attag, a poor man from Baghdad who sells used items, and his odd group of friends including a talking Donkey distinguished for his wisdom, as he struggles to convince his lover's wealthy father to give them the permission to get married. In the end, Jumaa can marry his beloved Hanadi when it happens, and Hanadi's father loses his business and falls to the level of poverty as Attag's family.<sup>205</sup> Atak frequently sings in music video style:

<sup>204</sup> Omar Adam Sayfo. "Arab Animation between Business and Politics". In book: Children's Television and Digital Media in the Arab World. Publisher: I.B. Tauris Editors: Naomi Sakr and Jeanette Steemers (28 July 2017).

<sup>205</sup> <https://creativepool.com/etana/projects/comedy-animation-series-al-attag-for-al-sharqiya-tv>

**Commented [69]:** Muhannad Abu Khumrah is an Iraqi director, producer, and writer. He is best known for *Hawa Baghdad* (2019), *Al Fashafeesh* (2018), *Al Attag* (2011). He is best known for his comedy, animation, romantic drama and commercial advertising. He holds numerous awards. Muhaned Abu KHumra was born in the city of Babylon in Iraq on April 5, 1983.

The Babylonian Muhaned Abu Khumrah was raised up with his 2 older brothers in the heart of Baghdad. An early interest in art led him to explore his talent to draw and create characters, his work amazed all and sundry even the gray-haired artists, and thus he won enormous prizes as a child.

As he grew up he started to watch more movies and developed his love for visual effects and animations. At the age of 17, Muhaned purchased his first computer and began exploring new programs such as 3D MAX, After Effect and Maya to improve his ability to transfer the inspiring creative world in his mind into real-looking animations. He started his career in 2D & 3D animations and then he moved into directing commercials, visual effect and designing intros and titles.

Over the years Muhaned gained well-respected reputation in the field as he worked with several TV Channels, Companies and other high profile studios in Dubai.

Currently, Muhaned is running his own Post-Production Company Etana in Dubai Media City employing his remarkable talent and imagination to create a range of TV commercials, Series in the highest Quality as well as Special Visual Effects, Motion Graphics. <https://www.muhaned.tv/about>



Figure 40. "Al-Atak" © Etana Production 2011

*Shalash* is an Iraqi animated series that revolves around *Shalash* an educated young man living in a poor neighborhood in Iraq and the daily events and stories that happen in it. *Shalash* owns a taxi that his loyal friend, Daaboul works on, In this poor neighborhood there is a big love story between *Shalash* and *Suzana* who works as a teacher in one of the schools in the Tanak neighborhood, but unfortunately, The two cannot marry because of the tribal and clan ideas that this poor region lives through that her cousin forbade, Various events take place in each episode about the events and problems that happen in the Tanak neighborhood between the work figures in a purposeful and critical comic form.



Figure 40. "Shalash" Series Poster and Episode 29 © Etana Production

*Al-Fasha Fish* is a satirical comedy that deals with the social problems experienced by the Iraqi people in a comic style, as it addresses many issues of concern to the family and the Iraqi youth and finds solutions by providing advice in a comic way that affects the Iraqi youth in an indirect way, combining some of the most famous cartoon comic characters in Iraq, Jumaa Al-Atak and Shalash from Al-Tanak neighborhood with their most prominent friends, Alouli, Al-Salit, Daaboul, Dahesh, Umm Shalash (Tashara) and Abu Juma'a (Maziel), and Umm Juma'a (Khajia).



Figure 40. "Al-Fasha Feesh" © Etana Production 2018

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The revival of animation in Egypt began in the 1988 when Dr. Mona Abu El-Nasr established Cairo Cartoon. Bakkar was broadcast on Egyptian Television Channel One for the first time in 1998. The success of Bakkar's first season within the Arab World allowed Cairo Cartoon became an incubator for many Egyptian animators.

Dr. Mona Abu El-Nasr was an Egyptian animation director from Alexandria (1952-2003). She received a bachelor's degree in fine arts from Helwan University in 1975, and a Ph.D. in animation from the University of California in 1988. She is best known for directing the 1998 animated series "*Bakkar*", which follows the adventure of the young Nubian, Bakkar, his pet goat Rashida, and Bakkar's friends. Her other notable work includes "The Sindbad's Journey" and "Super Heneidy".<sup>206</sup>

The success of Bakkar allowed young animators later would establish their own CGI and 3D studios and signed for their own production studios. Before this, foreign series would have been dubbed in Arabic to fit the viewers. Years later television workers with experience in dubbing foreign animation began to create Arab made animation.

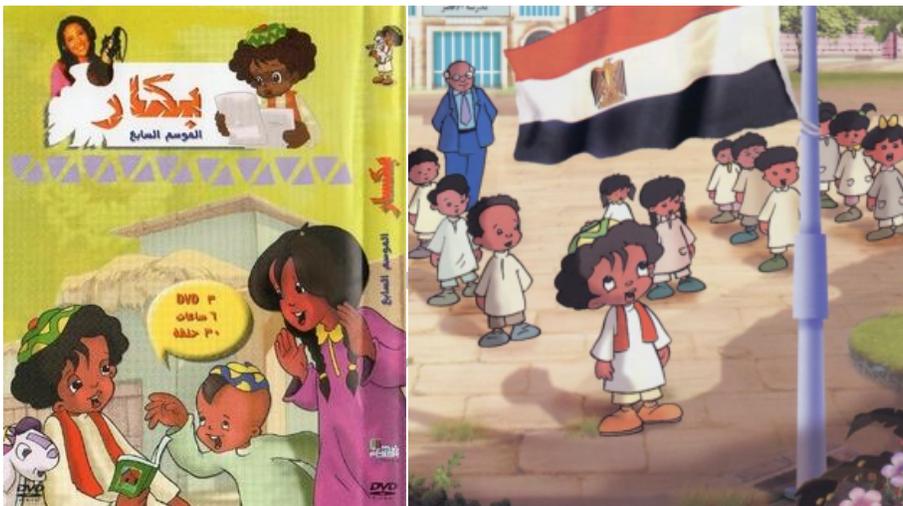
Bakkar was an innovative Egyptian cartoon character originating from the Egyptian heritage mixed with flair and beauty in southern Egypt. The beloved series follows the adventure of the ten-year-old young Nubian-Egyptian, Bakkar, his pet goat Rashida, and Bakkar's friends. The show would broadcast each year during the primetime of the holy month of Ramadan, directly after the breaking of the daily fast. The episodes of Bakkar dedicatedly

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<sup>206</sup>"Mona Abu El-Nasr (1952 – 2003) معنى أبو النصر". *elcinema*: <https://elcinema.com/en/person/1982856>

focused on raising children’s awareness of their responsibilities towards others. One episode for example would demonstrate the sympathy for the disabled; another episode would be about the importance of school and education.

The early episodes were very short, first broadcasting in 1998 they lasted over a five-minute duration, as the popularity increased, the episodes then extended to 20 minutes for each episode. After a nine-year run, the series totaled 252 episodes.



(بكار) "Bakkar" Animated Series

El-Nassr claimed that the figure of Bakkar was inspired by the Egyptian authorities labelling of the year 1997 as 'The year of Nubain Child'. The intention was to showcase the people of Nubia. The idea also focused on showing Egypt’s heritage, which included Pharaonic temples and museums, with a young Nubian child living a new adventure in every episode, interacting with his friends, and meeting new people.

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The show depicted the everyday life of a young child, from going to school, causing trouble to playing football with his friends. Bakkar was never presented as a superhero who saves the day, but as a sensible and honest boy who learns from his mistake, listens to grown-ups, and loves people, animals, and his country. He is presented as an 'authentic' Egyptian, characterized by being clean, loving, smart and brave. To teach children right from wrong, some episode Bakkar's friend Hassouna, who is known for being a showoff would occasionally get into trouble. This allowed Bakkar to become the voice of good, being the one to teach us that his friend was wrong to do so, resulting in the audience to fall further in love with Bakkar as a character.

What made Bakkar successful was although he's Egyptian he's from a minority group within Egypt itself. Bakkar's Nubian from his appearance, language, and settings; his skin is dark, and his clothes have the characteristics of traditional Nubian clothing. At the time people from Nubia had minimal roles in movies and were occasionally cast as farmers or simple tour guides. The show brought a positive stereotype presents to a minority group and allowed views to learn more about the Nubian culture and by showing those who still care for their families and each other, still live by traditional values and still believe in the good of other people. Through nine seasons, Bakkar grew into a national icon and a symbol of Egyptian unity.

Bakkar arrived on the scene just in time to support President Hosni Mubarak's (1981–2011) nationalist agenda at a time of domestic tensions and struggles with an armed Islamist

opposition. Through nine seasons, Bakkar grew into a national icon and a symbol of Egyptian unity.<sup>207</sup>

Mona's contributions to Egyptian animation and Egyptian TV lies precisely in her interest in local stories, characters, and language, allowing the children of Egypt to be represented within their own country's television.

According to Mona: "It's easier to import foreign series and have them dubbed, but this would be a very negative effect on our children. Neither the content nor the characters reflect our culture reality."<sup>208</sup>

After being suspended due to production issues in 2007, Bakkar was revived as a 3D-animated series on Ramadan 2015 only to be suspended again and then revived again in Ramadan 2021, each time adapting to new technological environments both on and off screen while avoiding explicitly politics endeavoring instead to express object morality and education.<sup>209</sup>

Commented [70]: In Google Doc version use this link for original Bakkar:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWj5TF9UejE&ab\\_channel=UNDPArabStates](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWj5TF9UejE&ab_channel=UNDPArabStates)

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<sup>207</sup> Omar Sayfo. "Minorities and Egyptian Cartoons". *Woolf Institute* (January 28, 2016): <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/blog/minorities-and-egyptian-cartoons>

<sup>208</sup> Animation in the Middle East: Practice and Aesthetics from Baghdad to Casablanca  
Stefanie Van de Peer I.B.Tauris, Feb 27, 2017.

<sup>209</sup> <https://www.egyptindependent.com/bakkar-animated-series-returns-this-ramadan-in-3d/>



(بكار) "Bakkar" Animated Series 2021 Episode 1 © Cairo Cartoon & Mona Abou El Nasr Studios

The first female animation producer and distributor was Jewish, Hungarian-born, Margaret J. Winkler, who began her career as personal secretary of Harry Warner, one of the founders of Warner Brothers.<sup>210</sup> In 1917, Warner Brothers began distributing cartoons of "Mutt and Jeff". Warner was impressed with Winkler's talents, and when Max and Dave Fleischer, came to him with their series "Out of the Inkwell", he gave it to Winkler and encouraged her to form her own distribution company. In 1922, she signed a contract with Pat Sullivan Productions to produce *Felix the Cat* cartoons. This established her reputation as the top distributor in the cartoon world. It was a good thing, because at the end of the same year the Fleischer brothers, flush with success because of Winkler's work, left her to form their own distribution company, Red Seal Pictures. However, much Sullivan helped Winkler's business, he

<sup>210</sup> Russell Merritt and J.B. Kaufman. "Walt Disney's Silly Symphonies: A Companion to the Classic Cartoon Series". *Disney Editions* (2016): pg. 15-16.

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and Winkler were constantly fighting. In September 1923, the renewal of his contract came up, and his unrealistic demands meant Winkler Pictures might have to survive for a while without its biggest star. Winkler viewed a pilot reel, called "Alice's Wonderland", submitted by then neophyte animator Walt Disney, the first entry in the "Alice Comedies" series.<sup>211</sup> Winkler was intrigued with the idea of a live-action girl in a cartoon world, and signed Disney to a year-long contract despite the fact that the studio that made the cartoon was now bankrupt.<sup>212</sup> Disney subsequently formed a new studio, Disney Brothers, which was the first cartoon studio in Hollywood and eventually changed its name to Walt Disney Productions. Disney was helped by the tutelage of Winkler, who insisted on editing all of the "Alice Comedies" episodes herself. Winkler was the first female member of the Motion Picture Producer's Guild. To disguise her gender, she would sign letters "M.J. Winkler."<sup>213</sup>

Another influential Jewish-American Cartoonist was Milt Gross (1895-1953). Born in the Bronx, Gross began an early career at the age of 20 working for New York Journal on a comic strip titled Phool Phan Phables. He is most famous for his 1926 publications "Hiawatta witt no odder" – a funny Yinglish (Yiddish-English) retelling of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous poem "The Song of Hiawatha" and "Nize Baby" – adapted into a Sunday newspaper comics strip – as well as "He Done Her Wrong", a parodic collection of woodcut panels which tells a love

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<sup>211</sup> Austin, Daryl (2019-12-21). "[The story of the Hungarian immigrant who funded Walt Disney](#)". *Newsweek*. Retrieved 2019-12-21.

<sup>212</sup> Russell Merritt and J.B. Kaufman. "Walt Disney's Silly Symphonies: A Companion to the Classic Cartoon Series". *Disney Editions* (2016): pg. 50-53.

<sup>213</sup> Johnson, Mindy (2017). *Ink & paint: the women of Walt Disney's animation*. p. 39. [ISBN 9781484727812](#). [OCLC 968290213](#).

story of about a hunter and a singer in Alaska and a scheming villain who tries to come between them, without a word of dialogue. Many of his comic strip characters such as “Count Screwloose” were featured in animated films which he wrote, animated, and/or directed including “Jitterbug Follies” (1939) and “Wanted: No Master” (1939).

Historian Raz Greenberg suggests that both Gross and the Fleischer brothers had a profound influence on Japan’s “God of Comics” Osamu Tezuka (1928-1989), both aesthetically, technically, and culturally through their own graphically expressed Jewish, immigrant experience.<sup>214</sup>

Yaakov Kirschen was born in Brooklyn NY in 1938. He studied art at Queens College and became a cartoonist after he graduated in 1961. In 1971 he moved to Israel, changed his first name from Jerry to Yaakov, and in 1973 began drawing a daily editorial strip called Dry Bones, a satirical comic series whose mission is “through research and analysis, to create an educational outreach to advance popular understanding and to correct this willful rewriting of history. The project intends to do so by means of cartoons, cartoon history books, and other works and through educational lectures.”<sup>215</sup> *Dry Bones* has become internationally syndicated and is known as “Israel’s Political Comic Strip”, published in *The Jerusalem Post*. Kirschen is a member of both America’s National Cartoonists Society and the Israeli Cartoonists Society. He has also been an innovative computer game designer and inventor. His company LKP Ltd. has

<sup>214</sup> Raz Greenberg. “A Yiddishe Manga: The Creative Jewish Roots of Japan’s ‘God of Comics’”. *Hebrew University* (2009).

<sup>215</sup> “The Dry Bones Project”. *Report, Inc.* (2021): <https://www.mrdrybones.com/index.html>

Commented [AH71]: Add pictures

Commented [AH72]: Nachum Gutman was born in Telenești, in modern Moldova. He was the fourth child of Rivka Simcha Alter Gutman, who was a Hebrew writer and educator who wrote under the pen name S. ben Zion. In 1903, the family moved to Odessa, and two years later, to Ottoman Palestine in Herzliya. In 1912, he studied at the Bezalel School in Jerusalem. In 1920–26, he studied art in Vienna, Berlin and Paris. Gutman helped pioneer a distinctively Israeli style in a variety of mediums, moving away from the European influences of his teachers. His sculptures and brightly colored mosaics can be seen in public places around Tel Aviv. Gutman’s artistic style was eclectic, ranging from figurative to abstract. Gutman was also a well-known writer and illustrator of children’s books. In 1935, Gutman published “In the land of Lubengolo King of Zulu” about his voyage to East Africa and the legendary King Lobengula of the Ndebele tribe.



In 1958 Gutman released a well-known Israeli children’s book, “Path of Orange Peels”, a story about a Jewish youth who becomes unwittingly involved in a dangerous and important mission during World War I as the British and Turks struggle for control of Palestine.

... [8]

done work for major computer and game companies both in Israel and in the U.S. In 2009, Kirschen was made a visiting fellow and artist in residence of Yale University's Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism and Racism. In 2010, Yale published Kirschen's groundbreaking working paper entitled "Memetics and the Viral Spread of Antisemitism through 'Coded Images in Political Cartoons'". The paper identifies antisemitism as a behavioral virus, reveals its use by totalitarian movements in their attempts to conquer the West, and isolates its three viral strains: "The Dehumanization Codes", which portray Jews as undeserving of the empathy that humans naturally feel for one another, spreading the belief that Jews are vermin, blood drinkers, or demons in league with evil forces. The Stereotyping Codes, which describe Jews as rich, ugly, money-grubbing, powerful, and secretly controlling the banks, the media, and the world. And "The Moral Inversion Codes", which negates the history of oppression of the Jews, portraying them as oppressors equivalent to Nazis.<sup>216</sup>



Figure 58. "Dry Bones" comic strip sample © Yaakov Kirschen

<sup>216</sup> "Yaakov Kirschen". *Koren Publishers Jerusalem* (Retrieved 6 July 2021): <https://korenpub.com/collections/yaakov-kirschen>

The 1960s saw the rise of satirical cartoonist Mahmoud Kahil. Kahil was born in Lebanon in 1936 and moved to London in 1978 to escape the violence of the Lebanese civil war. He became known for his commentary on the politics, Arab world, Lebanon, and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. Kahil was able to practice self-censorship, finding creative ways to get his messages across, not only to reach people across the ideological spectrum and appease his editors, operating under authoritarian scrutiny, but also to keep him and his family safe. After being told by his employers to draw whatever he liked as long as it was not too offensive, Kahil created the character the “Arab World”, which enabled him to express himself without fear of insulting anyone in particular.<sup>217</sup>



Mahmoud Kahil’s “Arab World” character (1993).

Kahil’s “Arab World” character has been emulated by other Arab cartoonists.

<sup>217</sup> Moe Chreif. “Cartoonist Mahmoud Kahil: A treasure unearthed”. *The New Arab* (2015).



Cartoon by Habib Hadad



"Uncle Sam or Aunt Sam?" © Emad Hajjaj 2020.

Around the same time emerged Palestinian Artist Naji Al-Ali. Al-Ali's cartoons were drawn from his experience as a Palestinian refugee since childhood and clearly reflected his political stance, which was often critical of the Arab regimes. As Al-Ali states, "I am accused of being biased and I don't deny it, I am not neutral, I am on the side of the poor."<sup>218</sup> His famous character "Handala", appeared in *Al-Siyasa* in Kuwait in 1969. The ten-year-old boy represented the age when Al-Ali was forced to leave Palestine and would not grow up until he could return to his homeland; his back turned and clasped hands symbolized the character's rejection of "outside solutions".<sup>219</sup> The name "Handala" is derived from the bitter tasting plant "handhal", symbolizing the bitter plight of the refugee.<sup>220</sup> This phenomenon draws parallels to the Jewish tradition of eating bitter herbs, "maror", on Passover to remember the bitterness of slavery in Egypt. Al-Ali was murdered for his activism in 1987 by anonymous gunmen in London.

<sup>218</sup> Kasim Abid. "Naji Al-Ali: An Artist with Vision". *Icarus Films* (2000).

<sup>219</sup> Naji Al-Ali interview with Radwa Ashour, "I am from Ain Al-Helwa". *Al-Muwagaha* (1985).

<sup>220</sup> Abdelaziz Elkhafaoui. "In Memoriam: Naji al-Ali, a Great Palestinian and Arab Cartoonist." *InsideArabia* (2018).

Ali's Handala is recognized all over the world. Ali had a tremendous cultural influence on Palestinian symbolism and future generations of Palestinian artists.



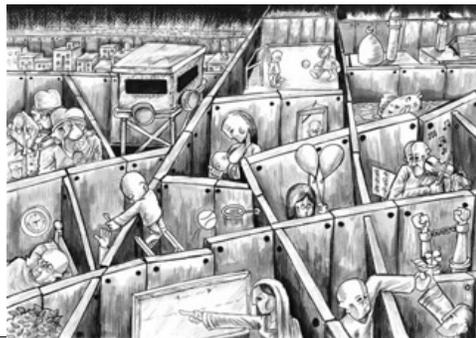
"Handala" by Naji Al-Ali.

Mohammad Saba'aneh is a Palestinian graphic artist living in Ramallah in the West Bank. He is the principal political cartoonist for Al-Hayat al-Jadida, the Palestinian Authority's daily newspaper, and has published his work in many other newspapers around the Arab World such as, *Al-Etehad*, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, *Al-Ghad Al-Ordoni* and *Al-Akhbar Al-Lubnanieh*. In 2013, Saba'aneh spent five months in Israeli prison, charged with collaborating with Hamas, after his brother, a member of Hamas, wrote and published a book on Palestinian political prisoners that included Saba'aneh's art. Saba'aneh stressed that the charges against him were baseless because he frequently publishes cartoons critical of all Palestinian political parties.<sup>221</sup> Though

<sup>221</sup> Patrick O. Strickland. "Jailed by Israel for his cartoons, Mohammad Saba'aneh speaks out". *Electronic Intifada* (2013).

**Commented [73]:** Maybe add Baha Boukhari, a Palestinian cartoonist, knows firsthand the dangers of his craft. In 2008, authorities in Gaza suspended publication of the popular newspaper Al Ayaam, where he was an employee, claiming that a comic he drew insulted Hamas. Boukhari and two senior employees faced a prison sentence until a series of demonstrations in Ramallah led to the dissolution of the charges.

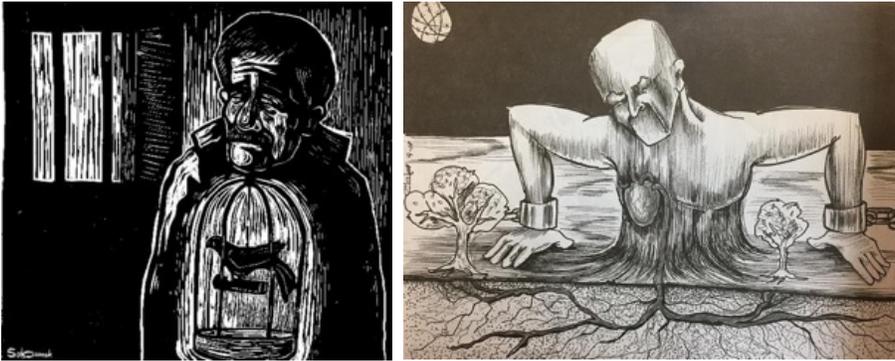
Saba'aneh was accused of "inciting violence", he insists that his mordant cartoons celebrate what Palestinians call "popular resistance" such as rock-throwing against Israeli forces, but do not glorify knife attacks against civilians. "Look, we've tried all the alternatives. Nothing is working," he said. "So what you call violence, we call resistance."<sup>222</sup> Saba'aneh's books of Illustrations, "*White and Black: Political Cartoons from Palestine*" (Just World Books, 2017) and "Palestine in Black and White" (Saqi Books, 2018) metaphorically capture the Palestinian struggle. Palestinian iconography is repeated throughout Saba'aneh's work such as Israel's concrete walls, caged birds, olive trees, cacti, kites, keys... to construct, reconstruct, and reinforce the meaning of Palestinian identity and struggle.<sup>223</sup> Drawing upon his experience in the Israeli prison system, Saba'aneh illuminates the psychological dependence of Palestinian prisoners on heroism and martyrdom "as a survival tactic to protect our souls from the dehumanizing conditions in which we found ourselves and to safeguard our ability to resist", and depicts all of Palestine as an open-air prison.<sup>224</sup>



<sup>222</sup> William Booth. "Meet the Palestinian Cartoonist Israelis Accuse of Incitement". *The Washington Post* (2015).

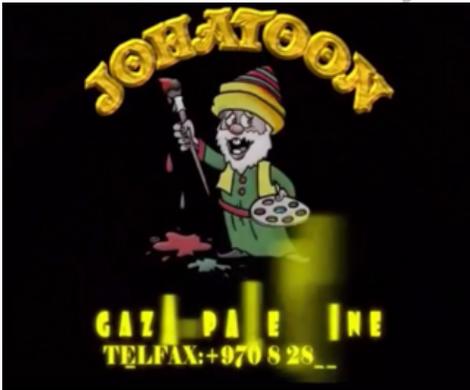
<sup>223</sup> Marguerite Dabaie. "Mohammad Saba'aneh's Dangerous Cartoons". *Electronic Intifada* (2017).

<sup>224</sup> Ramona Wadi. "Palestine in Black and White". *Middle East Monitor* (2018).



Drawings from Mohammad Sabaaneh's *"White and Black: Political Cartoons from Palestine"* (Just World Books, 2017) and *"Palestine in Black and White"* (Saqi Books, 2018)

Omayya Joha, the first female artist to work for a daily Arabic newspaper, called the "successor of Naji Al-Ali", her role model.<sup>225</sup> She established the cartoon production company "Johatoon", with the financial contributions of working women and created the first animated movie dealing with the Palestinian "Nakba" called "Hikayat Miftah" ("Story of a Key").<sup>226</sup>



"Hikayat Miftah" © Johatoon (2007)

<sup>225</sup> "Omayya Joha". Tosh Fesh. <http://toshfesh.com/articleSlider.php?id=381&catId=2>

<sup>226</sup> حكاية مفتاح "Hikayat Miftah" ("Story of a Key"): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzuLpIlli\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzuLpIlli_o)



Cartoons by Omayya Joha

While representing the unbridled perspective of herself, Gazans, and the Palestinian people, Joha demonstrate how cartoons can cross the line from legitimate criticism of Israel to anti-Semitism.<sup>227, 228, 229</sup>

Leila Abdelrazaq drew influence from Al-Ali's work in her graphic novel *Baddawi*, which tells the story of her Palestinian family. Al-Ali's "Handala" has been compared to Sruik as symbols of a generation of Israeli and Palestinian children.



*Baddawi*, Just World Books (2015) © Leila Abdelrazaq.



Jonathan Kislev & Moodi Abdallah, "The Peace Kids", Tel Aviv, Bethlehem (2013).

<sup>227</sup> Steven W. Smith. "Cartoons and the New Anti-Semitism" *Massey University College of Creative Arts, Wellington, New Zealand* (2012).

<sup>228</sup> "Cartoonist Joha vows to continue drawing despite deleting her Facebook page". *The Palestinian Information Center* (2016).

<sup>229</sup> <https://www.csmonitor.com/2001/1128/p1s4-wome.html>

Religious themes continue to play a prominent role in Middle Eastern comics and animation production.

Since at least 2018, the majority of comic books published in Israel are aimed at Haredi children and often require a stamp of approval of religious councils such as the Board of Supervision for Jewish Literature, an organization that reviews books aimed at the young Haredi audience and endorses them, determining the books to be educational and appropriate for the tender minds of Haredi readers, giving parents the peace of mind that the materials their children are reading have rabbinic approval. "Due to advanced technology, there is an abundance of reading materials available to our children, often coming from unknown sources. It has become imperative for parents to monitor what their children are reading, creating a need for a review board such as this one."<sup>230</sup>

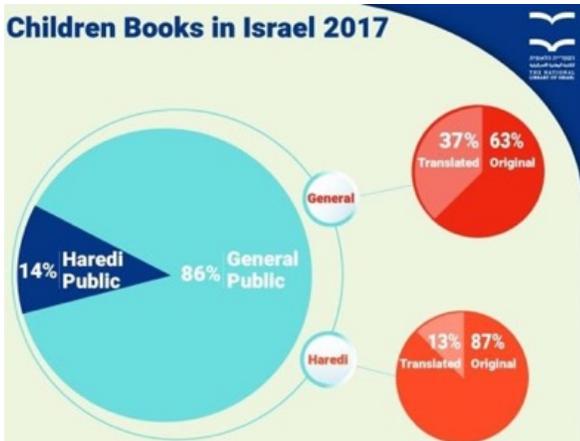
Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (1892-1953) speaks to the influence of imagery and thus importance of protecting young minds from harmful images and promoting morally positive content. "Thoughts and logical argument may have difficulty penetrating the subconscious, but images can reach down and after the subconscious springs of action."<sup>231</sup> Additionally, comics are particularly popular among religious children because their parents forbid them from accessing the internet or television to protect them from content that goes against their

Commented [AH74]: Add how popular religious comics are for religious children.

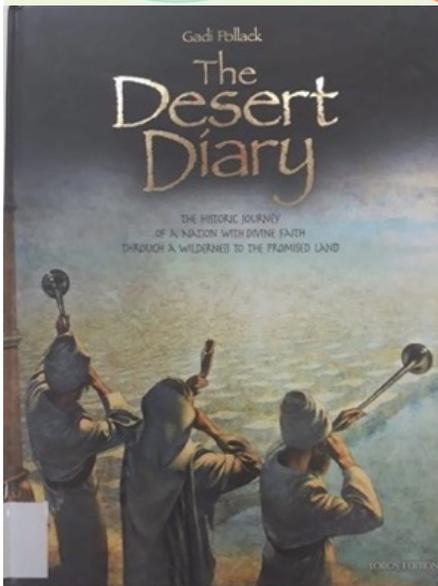
<sup>230</sup> Melody Barron. "The Comic Books on the Ultra-Orthodox Bookshelf." *National Library of Israel* (2018): [https://blog.nli.org.il/en/haredi\\_comics/](https://blog.nli.org.il/en/haredi_comics/).

<sup>231</sup> Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler. "Strive for Truth". *Feldheim Publishers* (2002): p. 122.

strongly held values and during their Sabbath, they can't use electronics which makes a good book particularly appealing.



Data on the state of Children Books according to the annual National Library of Israel book report.



Cover of "The Desert Diary," by Gadi Pollack, Maarava Publications, Jerusalem, 2017 plus Board of Supervision for Jewish Literature stamp.

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In 1995, director and university lecturer Zeinab Zamzam released the first clay animation series of Egypt, which revolved around the lives of the Prophets of Islam. With scripts approved by al-Azhar, Egypt's most prestigious religious institution, Zamzam's productions became part of the period's religious discourse. The characteristics and narratives of the productions also paved the way, and served as an example, for later Egyptian Islamic animated productions, including *Qisas al-Qur'an* (Stories of the Qur'an), released in 2011, among the most significant Islamic animated series to date, which signaled the rise of cartoons as cultural agents, with a distribution transcending not only national, but also geo-linguistic borders, reaching even non-Arab Muslim countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, and Malaysia.<sup>232</sup>

"Muhammad: The Last Prophet", produced in 2002, was the first animated feature film to depict the story of Mohammad. It was produced by Badr International and directed by Richard Rich.<sup>233</sup> Muhammad: The Last Prophet got approval from The Council of Al-Azhar Al-Sharief after two years of reviewing it from script to film.<sup>234</sup> It refrained from portraying and voicing the prophet and his revered companions, instead using POV, text, pillars of light, objects, and other creative means of representing these important figures to stay within official Islamic guidelines.

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<sup>232</sup> Omar Sayfo. "Minorities and Egyptian Cartoons". *Woolf Institute* (January 28, 2016): <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/blog/minorities-and-egyptian-cartoons>

<sup>233</sup> Lenburg, Jeff (2009). *The Encyclopedia of Animated Cartoons* (3rd ed.). New York: Checkmark Books. p. 204. [ISBN 978-0-8160-6600-1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9780816066001).

<sup>234</sup> Pinsky (2004).



Figure 57. Anthropomorphize the basket in the Prophet Moses' story

These omissions and replacements, however, sometimes disrupt the communication of the story. It is not necessary that the artist who produces Islamic art or films should be Muslim; but it should be produced to serve Islam, be influenced by Islam and follow Islamic law.<sup>235</sup>

Such an example comes from ATA Studio with a depiction of the 'Akeida' the bondage of Abraham's son, the first division between the Jewish tradition in which it was Isaac who was almost sacrificed and the Islamic tradition in which it was Ishmael.



"The story of the great slaughter:  
God's mercy on our master Ismail  
قصة الذبح  
رحمة الله ببيدنا اسماعيل و : العظيم  
فدائه" © ATA Animation Studio:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v>

<sup>235</sup> KOMAROFF, L. ND. Introduction to Islamic Art. Los Angeles County Museum for the Arts [online] Available at: [http://www.lacma.org/islamic\\_art/intro.htm](http://www.lacma.org/islamic_art/intro.htm) [Originally Accessed 22 August 2013]

The FineMedia Group produced several other Islamic-Middle Eastern animated films including *Great Women of Islam* (2002), *Salman the Persian* (2002), and *Before the Light* (2002), which were purchased and distributed by the Al-Jazeera Children’s channel, except for *Before the Light* to its depiction of “Hagar”, a woman married to the patriarch Abraham” as well as “Muhammad: The Last Prophet”, which was approved by The Council of Al-Azhar Al-Sharief Islamic Research Academy in which Muhammad (PBUH) is depicted as a baby, though from a far camera angle without showing his face and body details, as well as using point-of-view.<sup>236</sup>



Mohammad: The Last Prophet © 2002 Fine Media Group

In 2020, Netanel and Bat-El Epstein created the animated series “The Racheli Way” based on the beloved audio CD series “Racheli Catana” “Little Racheli” which teaches Jewish values through the adventures of a spunky, bright girl.

<sup>236</sup> Alrimawi, Tariq. “Issues of Representation in Arab Animation Cinema: Practice, History and Theory”. *Loughborough University* (2019):. p. 85.

**Commented [AH75]:** Maybe add somewhere the AJC animated effort to teach Arabic speakers about Judaism  
<https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Jewish-group-launches-Arabic-language-video-series-about-Judaism-616046>

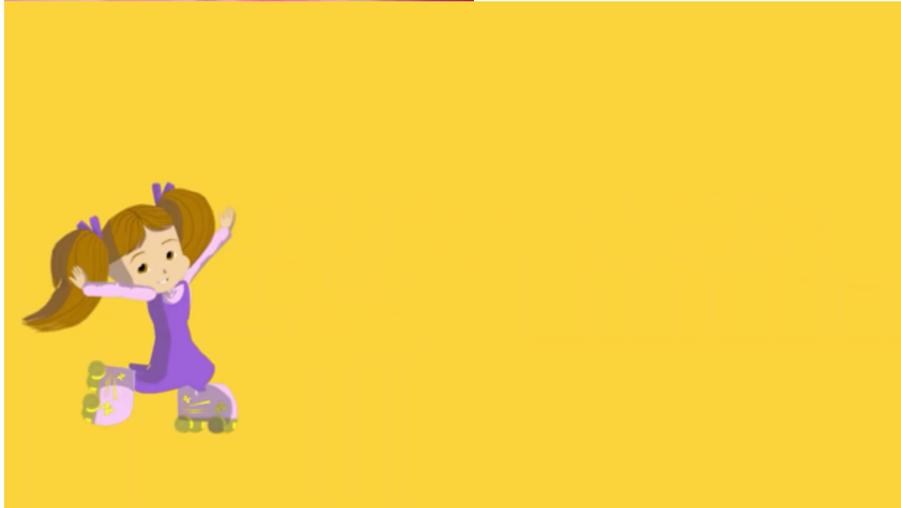
**Commented [AH76]:** Also maybe add AJC efforts to use comics to combat anti-Semitism:



Eric Godal’s 1945 cartoon, included in the New-York Historical Society exhibit “Confronting Hate 1937-1952,” was distributed with the cooperation of the CIO, the federation of industrial unions.  
 (photo credit: AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE)  
<https://www.jpost.com/j-spot/article-712950>  
<https://ajcarchives.org/main.php?GroupingId=3310>  
<https://www.nyhistory.org/exhibitions/confronting-hate-1937-1952>



*Little Racheli CD Series*



The Rachelli Way - Happiness Heals © Netanel Epstein 2021. רחלי הקטנה - השמחה היא רפואה

The second animated feature, *“Ha'Ya'ar Ha-Kasum”* (“Enchanted Amlash Forest”), was directed by Shlomo Suriano and screened at international festivals in 1974.

Commented [77]: <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3923814,00.html>  
<https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4167964,00.html>

The establishment of Israel's two television stations in the late 1960's brought about the opening of animation courses, the founding of studios, overseas studies, Ministry of Industry and Trade support for animation shorts and screenings of Israeli animation at festivals around the world. Among the important developments of the 1980's were Sesame Street productions, Roni Oren's plasticine films, which were purchased by many television stations, and the founding of International Animated Film Society (ASIFA) **Israel**.<sup>237</sup>

1990s Israel also saw huge changes for animation with the introduction of cable TV. Uri Shinar, who had previously produced outstanding animation and who would go on to establish the AniBoom studio, oversaw its content.<sup>238</sup>

Developments in digital hardware and software in the 1990s, led to the establishment of new studios including Broadcast Postproductions, Disk-In, JCS Post Productions, Gravity Rhino, and PIL Animation – PIL Animation was established in 1998 by the architect Sharon Gazit. Besides commercials, TV specials, and kids' series, Gazit created personal films: Master Café Shake (2003), Parents' Channel Filler (2004), The Material That Love Is Made Of (2004), Couples in Treatment (2008), and Woosht (2008).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union over 800,000 people emigrated to Israel during the 1990s, among them were skilled artists and animators. Some found work in existing studios or opened their own. Around fifty were invited in 1991 to go through animation training at a

<sup>237</sup> "Israeli Animation". *Israel Philatelic Federation* (2010): <http://israelphilately.org.il/en/catalog/articles/962/Israeli%20Animation%2021112010>

<sup>238</sup> Paolo Parmiggiani and Giannalberto Bendazzi. "Animation, A World History. Volume III, Contemporary Times". *CRC Press, Focal Press, Taylor & Francis Group* (2017).

**Commented [78]:** Add "animator, director, professor, and journalist Tsvika Oren, who has produced more than 30 films initiator, including Mermaid SOS Country-Israel Year-2004 Director-Avi Ofer, Tsvika Oren Awards Official selection I Casteli Animati 2004, Genzano di Roma, Italy. Asif 2004, Tel-Aviv. First prize for independent film and co-founder of the Israeli chapter of ASIFA (Association Internationale du Film d'Animation) v... [9]

**Commented [79]:** Maybe add: Sipur Ahava אהבה סיפור year 1980 country israel director Haim Callev Screenplay Yaffa Callev Producer Haim Callev Cinematographer Kobe Yoel ... [10]

**Commented [80]:** Maybe add: Swamp year 1992 country israel director Gil Alkabetz genre cartoon, short film time 11 min. Battle of two horse armies. Whose side will the ... [11]

**Commented [81]:** Maybe add: Lights the miracle of chanukah year 1983 country USA Israel genre cartoon short time 24 min. Premiere - USA 1983 ... [12]

**Commented [82]:** Maybe add: בצבוצ BITZBUTZ year 1984 country israel directed by Gil Alcabets script by Gil Alcabets genre cartoon short ... [13]

**Commented [83]:** Maybe add: צב קריאה Tzav Kriya year 1989 country israel director Haim Callev script by Yaffa Callev producer Haim Callev cameraman Kobe Yoel ... [14]

new studio, Anima Studios, established in Beit-Shemesh by veteran producer-director David (Dudu) Shalita, with some government support. The studio created commercials, five children's cassettes, and some work for foreign markets before it closed in 1996.

Some of the artists joined Shalita at Disk-In, Tel Aviv, for the ambitious film "Rashi: A Light after the Dark Ages", produced by Rabbi Berel Wein's "The Destiny Foundation", directed by Ashley Lazarus, and voiced by Leonard Nimoy (Star Trek's Spock). It told the story of the wise eleventh-century Torah commentator, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhak.



"Rashi: A Light After the Dark Ages" © *Destiny Foundation* (1999).

The Destiny Foundation produced two other animated feature films, [Rambam: The Story of Maimonides](#) and [Heaven and Earth: Stories of the Chassidic Masters](#) tells the timeless stories of the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Zusia of Hanopoli, the Maggid of Mezrich, Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, and Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk.

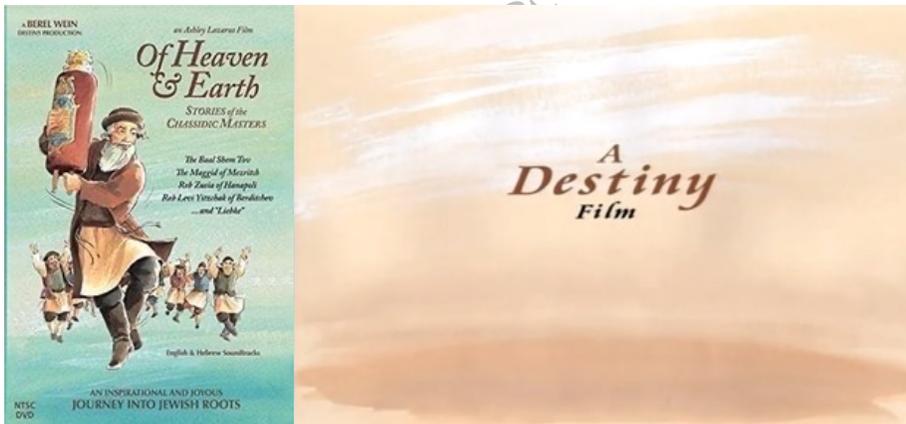
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“Rambam: The Story of Maimonides” © *Destiny Foundation* (2005).



“Of Heaven & Earth” © *Destiny Foundation* (2005).

Nimoy also brought his voice talent to the 22-minute animated special: “Lights – The Miracle of Chanukah”, a moving rendition of the story of Chanukah, co-sponsored by: The Joint Program for Jewish Education of the State of Israel, The Israel Ministry of Education and Culture, The Jewish Agency for Israel, and the World Zionist Organization.”

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“Lights – The Miracle of Chanukah” © Geshher Jerusalem Productions (1984).

In 1985 Noam Meshulam established Pifchi Poy animation studio in Jaffa, producing commissioned work and initiating series and features. In 1992 Meshulam created the first original Hebrew prime-time animated TV series for adults, “Shimshonim” in collaboration with Israeli cartoonist Dudu Geva (1950-2005).



“Shimshonim” (“השמשונימים”), with Dudu Geva” © Dudu Geva, Noam Meshulam (1992).

**Commented [84]:** In the twenty-first century, Israeli animation is bursting with renewed vigor with many cartoons and a sea of awards. Israel is turning from a consumer of animation to a producer of animation!

The waitress  
year 2000  
Country - Israel  
Director - Talya Lavie

Curtain No. 2  
Country-Israel  
Year 2000  
Director-Oran Adler

Gershon

year 2001  
country israel  
directed by Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv  
Screenplay by Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv  
Producer Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv  
Cinematographer Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv  
composer Saar Bar Shalev  
artist Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv  
Editing: Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv  
genre cartoon, short film  
time 11 min.

Awards  
Film Schools Festival, Mexico  
Students Film Festival, Moscow  
Fidéc - International Festival for Cinema Schools, Huy, Belgium  
Festival of Short Films and New Images, Rome  
Haifa International Film Festival - First Prize (short film)  
Hannover Film Festival Germany

Menashe and Nechama

Country-Israel  
Year-2001  
Director-Micha Amitai

Awards  
Melbourne Students Festival, Australia, 2002  
British Animation Awards, London, 2002  
Haifa Film Festival, 2001  
MK 22

Country-Israel

Year-2004

Genre

Animation

Sitcom

Created by

Yaron Niski

... [15]

**Commented [85]:** Add: Caspion

Country-Israel

Year-2004

Director-Noam Meshulam

In 2012, "Pitchi Poy", set out to develop an animated feature film inspired by the paintings of pioneering Israeli artist and children's book author-illustrator Nachum Gutman, called "The Boy who Painted a Donkey Blue" (the Hebrew name is "Bein Holot Ushvil Klipot"), a coming-of-age story about an eight-year-old boy named "Nachum", who arrives with his family to Jaffa in Ottoman Palestine as the British are seizing control. Nachum is caught at the juncture of two cultures, yearning to be an artist, forced to become a fighter.

Commented [86]: what does the name mean and where did it come from?



"The Boy who Painted a Donkey Blue" © Pitchi Poy (2012): [Trailer](#)

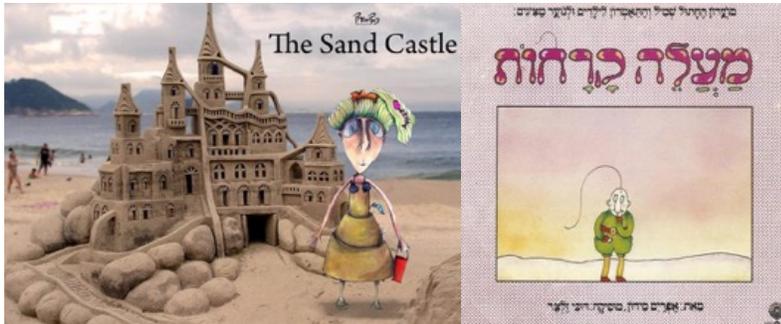
Pitchi Poy developed two other animated feature films in 2013 with the support of the Jerusalem Film Fund, "The Sand Castle", which shows what happens inside a sand castle after the children who built them leave the beach and return to their homes and "Baldy Heights", a story freely adapted from Ephraim Sidon's children's book "Ma'aleh Karahot," which follows a girl from Curly Hills into the enemy city of Baldy Heights, "where every scalp is sleek and shiny, every building domed and polished and baldness is legally required and viciously enforced".

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However, none of these films were able to collect enough funding to produce as full-length feature and instead became animated shorts.<sup>239</sup>



"The Sand Castle" © Pitchi Poy (2012): [Trailer](#)

Pitchi Poy developed iconic animated commercials for some of Israel's biggest brands such as Osen's "Bamba":



Bamba Commercial © Pitchi Poy

<sup>239</sup> Nirit Anderman. "Can Jerusalem Redraw the Global Animation Map?" *Haaretz* (2015): <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/culture/.premium-redrawing-the-global-animation-map-1.5344443>

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Pitchi Poy also created several original Hebrew animated series including "Ulai Pil" ("Maybe an Elephant"), based on a play from the Orna Porat Theater in Tel Aviv, about two sisters, Gali, the older, tidier sister and Ayelet, who loves to draw. When Gali asks her what she draws, she answers, "Maybe an elephant?" Ayelet paints "Maybe Elephant" and "Unfinished", and when no one is around they come to life, come out of the page and get into all sorts of trouble.

In 2021, Pitchi Poy developed a beautiful animated short about Donna Gracia, Doña Gracia Nasi, a Portuguese intellectual and one of the wealthiest Jewish women of Renaissance Europe, who developed an escape network that saved hundreds of Conversos from the Inquisition, as part of Tel Aviv's Beit Hatfutsot-Museum of the Jewish People's gallery, "Heroes – Trailblazers of the Jewish People".



"The Legend of Dona Gracia Mendes Nasi © Pitchi Poy 2021

Dudu Geva was born in Jerusalem in 1950. Geva started his artistic career at the age of 17, in the youth weekly newspaper Haaretz Shelanu. He became one of the most provocative, subversive Israeli illustrators. In his army service, Geva contributed to the military's newspaper *Bamahane*. After his military service, Geva joined the staff of Israel TV's Channel One (the mainstream, government-sponsored station) as a graphic designer. He published caricatures, comic strips, and satire columns in Israel's leading newspapers: [Haolam Hazeh](#) ("Zoo-Aretz-Zoo"), [Hadashot](#) ("The Song of the Duck"), [Hair](#) ("Joseph and his Brothers", "The Silence of the Duck"), [Kol Hair](#) ("Ahalan and Sahalan"), Maariv ("The Road to Happiness", "Geva's Journal") and Haaretz ("The Weekly Caricature") and produced dozens of illustrations collaboration with many of Israel's writers and artists including: *The Knight Zick* (1976-2002) with [Hanoch Marmari](#), *Ridiculous Book* (1981), *Son of Ridiculous* (1983), and *Ridiculous Strikes Again* (1985) with Kobi Niv, *Kotz in the Potz* (1984), *Ahalan and Sahalan in the Wild West* (1985) with Kobi Niv, *Dwarf in the Pants* (1985), *The Journal of the Clerk* (1987), *The Duck* (1994), *The Knight Zick in the Torah Wise Men Land* (2002).<sup>240</sup>

Commented [AH87]: Maybe add: Veteran Israel illustrator and animator Yossi Abulafia, who used to head the animation department at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, will receive a special honor at the festival. Abulafia has created animated clips for television shows in Israel and abroad, including the 1970s Israeli satirical program "Nikui Rosh," worked as an illustrator for several newspapers and created an animated video of the Hebrew children's book "Nehama the Louse" (Hakina Nehama). <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5152339>

Commented [88]: Maybe add: Geva's series entitled Yoman Hapakid (The diary of the clerk) and the Yossef and his Brothers

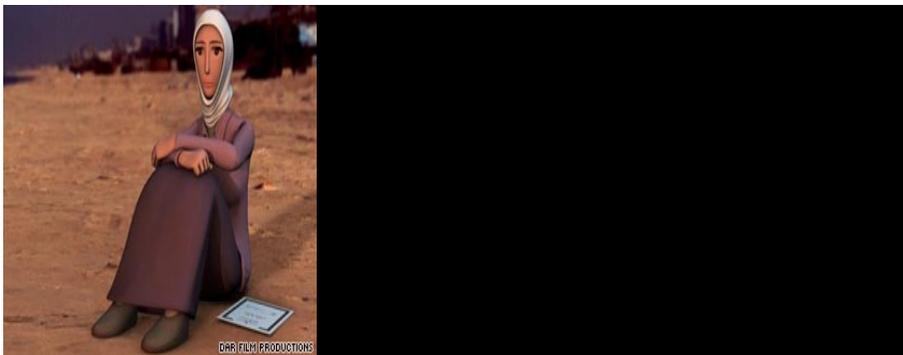


<sup>240</sup> [Michal Palti and Ruta Kupfer](#). "Israeli Comics Have Lost Their Spiritual Father" *Haaretz* (2005). <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/culture/1.4747367>



Sample of works by Dudu Geva © Dudu Geva

In 2009, *"Fatenah"* became the first 3D animated film made in the Palestinian territories. Animated and directed by Ahmad Habash and produced by Saed Andoni. The screenplay was written by Saed Andoni, Ahmad Habash, and Ambrogio Manenti. This 27-minute animation was released and distributed with the support of WHO West Bank and Gaza, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and Sabreen Association for Artistic Development. *Fatenah*, based on a true story documented by WHO and Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)-Israel, is about a 27-year-old young woman living in Gaza, who while conducting a self-examination, discovers a lump in her breast and desperately seeks medical treatment outside Gaza. In 2003, he directed his first professional animation "Coming Back", taking a blackly humorous view of the Palestine/Israel question.



"Fatenah" © Dudu Geva © Saed Andoni

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**Commented [89]:** Born in Iraq to Palestinian Parents, Ahmad traveled from one country to another during childhood and teenage years, with or without his family. In spite of his parent's professions in Politics and Medicine, they both had their artistic side in their life and as devoted amateur artists, Ahmad grew up surrounded by painters, movie directors and poets.

At the age of nine, Ahmad's infatuation with cartoon-watching went beyond being an enchanted audience to creating his own characters and scenarios. His parents noticed and encouraged his illustration abilities. Ahmad started creating character designs and series of flip books then, at the age of 12, he was introduced to his first animation software. The ability to add motion to his illustrations giving them a magical life of their own was captivating. He knew then: an animator is what he wanted to be.

After graduating from the High Institute of Film and Television in Cairo, Egypt with a BA in film directing, Ahmad worked in the independent film industry and in a variety of advertising and artistic productions, documentaries and features. This professional experience helped him realise his own aesthetic vision to produce pieces with artistic values and profound contents.

Ahmad Habash lives and work in Wellington, New Zealand.

In 2006, he directed and animated *Flee*, a sand animation short, part of a Palestinian filmmaker collective's project called "Palestine, Summer".

Amer Shomali is a Palestinian interdisciplinary visual artist who uses conceptual art, painting, digital media, films and comics to explore Palestinian sociopolitical issues and revolution iconography.<sup>241</sup> In 2014, Shomali completed the animated documentary *The Wanted 18*, co-directed with Canadian director Paul Cowan, about the efforts of his Palestinian town of Beit Sahour to establish an independent dairy industry during the First Intifada. The idea for *The Wanted 18* began in Shomali's boyhood, spent largely at a Syrian refugee camp, where his main escape had been reading comic books, one of which dealt with the story of the Beit Sahour cows. *The Wanted 18* was named Best Documentary from the Arab World at the 2014 Abu Dhabi Film Festival, and the Best Documentary at Carthage Film Festival.<sup>242</sup>



*The Wanted 18* Trailer © 2014 NFB, Kino Lorber

<sup>241</sup> <http://www.amershomali.info/>

<sup>242</sup> [DG Stewart](https://www.worldcomicbookreview.com/2017/12/01/zan-al-ann-review/). "Zan al ann (Review)". *World Comicbook Review* (2017): <https://www.worldcomicbookreview.com/2017/12/01/zan-al-ann-review/>

Commented [AH90]: Maybe add:

... [16]

Commented [91]: Maybe add that there aren't any Universities in Palestine that offered courses in comics and animation and with money tight in Palestine, architecture was a more practical path for those with artistic inclinations towards cartoons and animation such as Shomali

Khalil Abu Arafah is a Palestinian cartoonist, in favour of peaceful resistance. He was born in Jerusalem in 1957.

He studied architecture in Kiev (Ukraine) and he currently pursues a double career of architect and designer. His editorial cartoons are published in the daily newspaper Al Quds (based in East Jerusalem) since 1994.

Khalil is also a writer and he published several illustrated books for children. He was also the first head writer of the Palestinian version of the TV show "Sesame Street". In 1996, Khalil received the Ghassan Kanafani Award for excellence as a cartoonist.

Both the Palestinian Hamas and the Israeli government are not pleased with his political activism which led him to spend a total of fourteen months in Israeli prisons between 1986 and 1992.

<https://www.cartooningforpeace.org/en/dessinateurs/khalil/>

Add Samir Harb

Born 1981 in Ramallah/Palestinian territories.

... [17]

Shomali has used political cartoons and animation to support local and international political campaigns and open local social debates such as the comic series, “Zan Al-An” (“Zan Now”).



Commented [AH92]: Maybe add Emile Bravo's "The Ben Qutuz Brothers in Frustration Land"

In 2007 Shomali also created an animated series together with Palestinian artist Basel Nassr as part of Zan Studios called “هموم متحركة” (“Homoom Motahrika”) (Animated Troubles) which aired on national Palestinian TV in 2008 a mature, modern cartoon that spotlights, criticizes and demystifies many key social issues in Palestinian society ranging from police corruption, vices and intellectual resistance. Subhi, the protagonist, is famous for his big lips, wild hair, and the troublesome life he leads. Radwan Kasmiya directed Wall in My Heart

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(2008), a story about a Palestinian family from the West Bank: three days of going to school through checkpoints, visiting Palestinian prisoners, and facing Israeli military aggression.

There is also a Jewish youngster, forced to live in Palestine, who has become mentally ill.



“هموم متحركة” (“Homoom Motahrika”) (Animated Troubles) © 2007 Amer Shomali, Basel Nassr, Zan Studios

In wake of the 2020 Beirut explosion, [Maamoul Press](#), Leila’s comics-focused publishing house and literary collective based in Detroit, Michigan, responded to the 2020 Beirut Explosion by publishing a collection of illustrations created by young Lebanese artists titled [Now & Then](#).

All proceeds from sales of the book went to disaster relief in Lebanon.<sup>243</sup> The American University of Beirut is home to the Mutazz and Rada Sawwaf Arab Comics Initiative, an award for emerging comics artists in the Arab World named in honor of Mahmoud Kahil, as well as one of the only graphic novel degree programs in the world.

Lebanon has developed a strong comics culture, in part due to the relatively high freedom of expression compared to the rest of the Arab world.<sup>244</sup> The first small number of

<sup>243, 85</sup> M. Lynx Qualey. “Arab Comic Reach a Wider Audience Through Digital Products”. *Al-Fanar Media* (2020).

<sup>244</sup> Soraya Morayef. “Arab Comics: Fit for Academic Exploration”. *Al-Fanar Media* (2014).

Commented [93]: This could be a good place to follow up with the influence of Banksy also maybe: Carlos Latuff

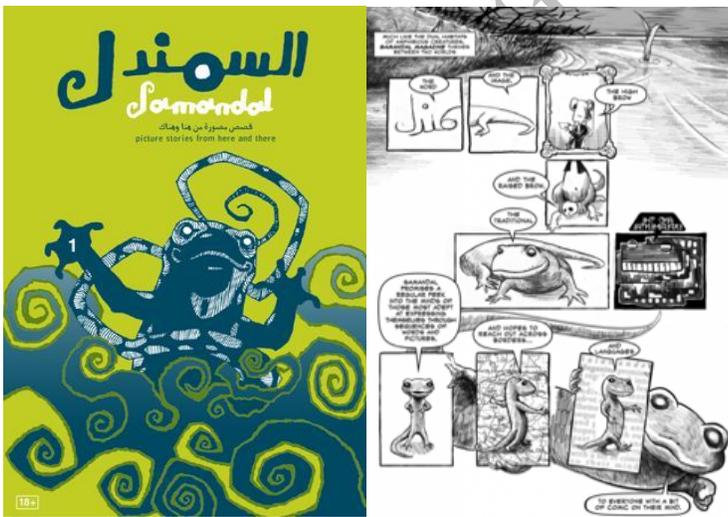
Also maybe: Solomon Souza  
The Machane Yehuda Market in Jerusalem is at the heart of the city’s thriving foodie scene but has also recently transformed into a vibrant art gallery thanks to young British street artist Solomon Souza, born in 1993. Souza is famed for his colourful spray-painted depictions of well-known contemporary and historical Jewish and Israeli figures, visible on market shops’ metal shutters. Aside from honing his artistic skills at his London high school, Souza is self-taught and has dabbled in graffiti since he was a teenager. He was first commissioned by his friend Berel Hahn to paint the market’s stalls as a way of enlivening the area at night, when shops may be closed but bars and cafés open their doors. Former Israeli prime minister Golda Meir, infamous spy Jonathan Pollard and British philanthropist and Jerusalem-devotee Sir Moses Montefiore – Souza has so far completed more than 100 vivid portraits, turning a Jerusalem landmark visited by thousands daily into a living art gallery and a popular attraction for both locals and tourists.

Street artist Solomon Souza in front of one of his famous spray-painted portraits | © David Vaakin for 'The Washington Post'  
<https://theculturetrip.com/middle-east/israel/articles/the-7-most-influential-israeli-artists-of-all-time/>

Commented [94]: Find images and/or video

adult comics appeared in Lebanon with *Carnaval* (1980) and *Freud* (1983) by George Khoury (called JAD), and the comics collective JADWorkshop with the publication *Min Bayrūt* in 1989.<sup>245, 246</sup>

In 2007, cartoonists Omar Khouri, Hatem Imam, Lena Merhej and Fadi Baki founded the magazine *Samandal*, a trilingual (Arabic, French, and English) publication out of Beirut that became one of the premier magazines for publishing both Middle Eastern and European comics. Addressing contemporary social issues, the magazine quickly became a venue that Lebanese cartoonists could use to talk about their lives. In 2015, the editors faced heavy fines after publishing a comic “belittling Christianity”.<sup>247</sup>



[Samandal Comics Issue #1 \(2010\)](#)

<sup>245</sup> Emanuela De Blasio. “Comics in the Arab world: Birth and spread of a new literary genre”. *Anaqueel de Estudios Árabes* (March 2020): <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/anaqe.67162>.

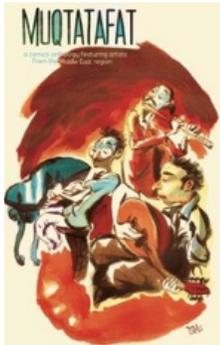
<sup>246</sup> M. Lynx Qualey. “Arab Comic Reach a Wider Audience Through Digital Products”. *An-Fanar Media* (2021).

<sup>247</sup> Caitlin McCabe. “5 Year Court Battle Leads to Censorship of Lebanese Comics Magazine”. *Comic Book Legal Defense Fund* (2015).

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In response, *Muqtatafat*, an initiative of the Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies, became the first Middle Eastern comic anthology published in the U.S. featuring stories and illustration from many of the luminaries of Arab comics: [Lena Merhej](#) (Lebanon); [Mike V. Derderian](#) (Jordan); [Omar Khouri](#) (Lebanon); [Maya Zankoul](#) (Lebanon); [Nidal El Khairy](#) (Jordan); [Mahdi Fleifel](#) (Palestine, Holland); [Basel Nasr](#) (Palestine); [Ghadi Ghosn](#) (Lebanon); [Sandra Ghosn](#) (Lebanon, France); [Wassim Maouad](#) (Lebanon); [Magdy El Shafee](#) (Egypt); [Jana Traboulsi](#) (Lebanon); [Mohamed El Shennawy](#) (Egypt); [Barrack Rima](#) (Lebanon, Belgium); [Mohamed Tawfik](#) (Egypt), co-edited by [Anna Mudd](#), [A. David Lewis](#), and [Paul Beran](#). All profits were donated to *Samandal* to aid them against the costs of authoritarian censorship.<sup>248</sup>

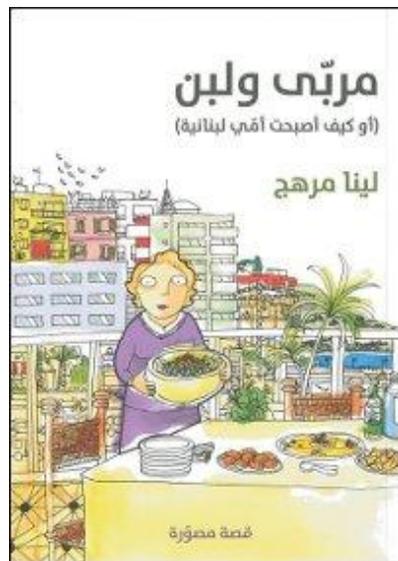


*Muqtatafat* © 2015 Ninth Art Press.

<sup>248</sup> Jonathan Guyer. "Understanding Arab Comics". *LA Review of Books* (2016).

Similarly, after the 2021 11-day Israel-Hamas war, Parents Against Child Detention, led by Nirith Ben Horin founder and chairwoman of Parents Against Child Detention with executive director Moria Shlomot.

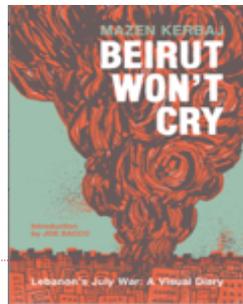
Lena Merhej (PhD) is a Lebanese graphic artist, storyteller, professor, and editor in chief of the comics' magazine Samandal. Her animation "Drawing the War" (2002), her comic book "Sana Kaman" ("Another year") (2009), and her book "Mirna wa Laban" ("Yogurt and Jam") (2011), the first full-length graphic novel to be translated from Arabic to French, received international awards.<sup>249</sup>



<sup>249</sup> M. Lynx Qualey. "Lena Merhej's 'Jam and Yogurt' First Graphic Novel Translated from Arabic to French". *ArabLit* (2015); <https://arablit.org/2015/10/03/lena-merhejs-jam-and-yoghurt-first-graphic-novel-translated-from-arabic-to-french/>.

*Mirna wa Laban (Yogurt and Jam) © 2011 Alifabata.*

Between 2007 and 2017, illustrator, author, and jazz musician, Mazen Kerbaj crafted a compilation of comics, "Beirut Won't Cry", which chronicles his lived perspective on Lebanon and the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War.



Beirut Won't Cry © Mazen Kerbaj.

Inspired largely by *Samadal*, comics studios began popping up across the Arab world. In Egypt there are [TokTok](#), [Garage](#), and [El3osba](#); [Lab619](#) in Tunisia; [Skefkef](#) in Morocco; [Waratha](#) in Algeria, [Habka](#) in Libya; and many more.<sup>250</sup> Arab Comics Expert and Artist George Khoury (JAD) writes, "TokTok has gathered together young Egyptians in search of a platform for their work. In addition to responding to a crying need nationwide, TokTok is rapidly become a veritable "Arab oasis", opening its pages artists from all over the region and

<sup>250</sup> M. Lynx Qualey. "Arab Comic Reach a Wider Audience Through Digital Products". *An-Fanar Media* (2020).

**Commented [95]:** Maybe add Joumana Medlej "Joumana Medlej was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon. Begun in 2006, Malaak:Angel of Peace is my debut series and so far counts 4 volumes in print, with a French version available as ebooks, and 2 more volumes in the making. It is Lebanon's first adventure comic and the only one of its scope. It owes much to my own experience of life during war, my history with martial arts, and my ongoing research in local history and mythology. My work in comics is not, however, limited to it, neither in style nor in subject matter: you can see other approaches in my other comics, and the full range of styles and mediums I explore is visible in my illustration work. Her life took an unexpected turn when master calligrapher Samir Sayegh invited her to be his assistant. Through years of close collaboration, she learned the essence of Kufic, the origin of all Arabic calligraphy. She developed her own visual language out of this lesser-known style. Joumana moved to London in 2013 to dedicate herself to her art practice. Her work is found in private and public collections in the Middle East and in the West." Commenting on the nature of Islamic art, specifically calligraphy, Joumana writes, "Free from iconography, the work bypasses the mind to engage a deeper recognition. The geometric compositions refer us not to the world of forms but to a cosmic order; their architectural quality generates a space in which one is held in contemplation and stillness."

**Commented [96]:** Maybe add: Lamia Ziadé's *O Nuit O Mes Yeux*. This gorgeous graphic novel, by the tremendously gifted Ziadé (also the author of the Lebanese Civil War memoir *Bye Bye Babylon*, tr. Olivia Snajje), was featured in *Bulaq* Episode 18. *O Nuit O Mes Yeux* is a stylish, charming illustrated text about the larger-than-life lives of Arab musicians. An excerpt titled "Fairouz in my Grandfather's Shop," translated into English by Edward Gauvin, appears in the July 2018 *Words Without Borders*.

Rawand Issa's *Not from Mars* This intense, poetic, and personal graphic novel from Lebanese artist Rawand Issa explores life, love, and what it means to be a woman. Although this is not in translation, if you buy the edition from Maamoul press, it comes with an "English translation sheet." Maamoul also has a bilingual edition of Issa's *The Insubordinate* in a "do-si-do fold."

Soumeya Ouarezki and Mahmoud Benamar's *Fatma N'parapli* The opening of a book series written in Algerian Arabic, which centers on two mysterious women who liv... [18]

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especially from the Maghreb, playing on the geographical proximity of the countries but also of their social, political and economic structures.”<sup>251</sup>



Waratha

Habaka

TokTok



© Garage

© Skefkef

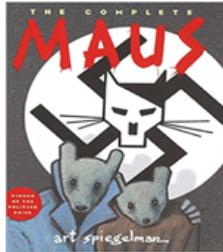
© Lab619

© El3osba

“Maus” is a graphic

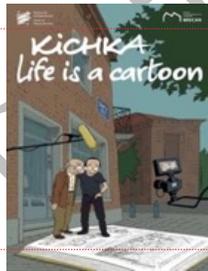
novel by American cartoonist Art Spiegelman, serialized from 1980 to 1991. It depicts Spiegelman interviewing his father about his experiences as a Jewish Holocaust survivor. It was the first graphic novel to win a Pulitzer Prize. While it was not written specifically for children, the cat and mouse depictions of Nazis and Jews make it easier for a younger audience to bear the burden of learning about the Holocaust.

<sup>251</sup> George (JAD) Khoury. “A Resurrected Rebellion: The Will of Young People against History”. *Angoulême Festival 2018, Aljbat, France (2018)*.



"Maus" © Art Spiegelman.

Similarly, Michel Kichka, brought the story of his relationship with his holocaust surviving father to life in the animated documentary, *Kichka: Life is a Cartoon* based on his graphic novel, *Second Generation*.



*Life is A Cartoon* © Michel Kichka.

*The Rabbi's Cat* (French: *Le chat du rabbin*) is a 2011 French animated film directed by Joann Sfar and Antoine Delesvaux, based on Sfar's graphic novel. It tells the story of a cat, who obtains the ability to speak after swallowing a parrot, and its owner – a rabbi in 1920s Algeria.

**Commented [97]:** Maybe add some of these:  
 Baraitser, Marion and Anna Evans. Home Number One: A Graphic Novel. Loki Books, 2006. Dinah, a bored Jewish girl living in the repressed city of Utopia in the imagined America of 2020, is sent on a life-changing journey to 1943, where she joins her distant cousin Gonda and two friends in Theresienstadt. This graphic novel offers a unique way for teen readers to explore the Holocaust.  
 Burstein, Chaya. The Kids' Cartoon Bible. Jewish Publication Society of America, 2002. Using a comic book style format, Burstein offers familiar Bible stories in an easy and accessible format for children ages 9 and up.  
 Gunderson, Jessica. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (Graphic Library). Capstone Press, 2006. With easy-to-read text and large, brightly-colored illustrations, this exciting retelling of the Triangle fire provides a good introduction to the topic for readers ages 8- 10.  
 Hudson-Goff, Elizabeth and Jonatha A. Brown. Anne Frank (Graphic Biographies). World Almanac Library, 2006. The well-known story of Anne Frank is given a new twist as a graphic novel. Because of the subject matter and some disturbing images of concentration camp victims, this book is recommended for ages 10-12.  
 Kubert, Joe. The Adventures of Yaacov & Isaac. Mahrwood Press (distributed in the U.S. by Feldheim Publishers), 2004. Kubert's stories about two young brothers impart Torah values and Jewish history lessons in an exciting action-adventure comic book style that is likely to appeal to elementary school boys ages 10 and up.  
 Mahr, Aryeh. Shmuel Ha Nagid: a Tale of the Golden Age. Mahrwood Press, 2005. The life of Shmuel Ha Nagid, a Talmudic scholar, statesman, and warrior, is told in a vibrantly-illustrated style, and is most suitable for an Orthodox audience ages 9-12.  
 Lutes, Jason and Nick Bertozzi. Houdini: The Handcuff King. Hyperion, 2007. This snapshot of one day in the life of the famous showman offers an edge-of-your-seat reading experience for children ages 10 and up.  
 Moscovitz, Moshe. Miracle Lights: The Chanukah Story. Shazak Productions, 2004. Benny learns the story of Chanukah from his grandfather in this "animated" book, suitable for children as young as 6.  
 Moscovitz, Moshe. Out of Egypt. Shazak Productions/Feldheim, 2007. Shazak Productions newest book focuses on the story of Exodus. Some scary images make this book more appropriate for children 10 and up.  
 Moscovitz, Moshe. The Queen of Persia: An Illustrated Adaptation of an Ancient Story. Shazak Productions, 2003. Bold cartoon-style illustrations retell the story of Queen Esther. Since this version is somewhat ... [19]

**Commented [AH98]:** Maybe add movie



The Rabbi's Cat © Joann Sfar.

In the 90s in Israel, comics won a new respectability due to the efforts of Etgar Keret, who published several critically acclaimed comics stories including *Jetlag* (1998) and *Pizzeria Kamikaze* (2005).<sup>252</sup>



Jetlag and Pizza Kamikaze © Etgar Keret

Tatia Rosenthal, born in Tel Aviv 1971, an Israeli-American artist, attended the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU where she created the short puppet animation film *Crazy Glue* (1998), based on a story by Etgar Keret. Keret's work inspired another puppet animation short by Rosenthal, "A Buck's Worth" (2005) which became the proof-of-concept for the Israeli-Australian feature

<sup>252</sup> Harry Brod. "Superman Is Jewish?: How Comic Book Superheroes Came to Serve Truth, Justice, and the Jewish-American Way Harry Brod. New York: Free Press (2012).

**Commented [AH99]:** Maybe add movie

**Commented [100]:** About...

**Commented [101]:** About...

**Commented [102]:** Add Tatia Rosenthal and Etgar Keret's feature "\$9.99"  
Tatia Rosenthal (b. Tel Aviv, 1971), an Israeli-American artist, attended the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. Here she created the short puppet animation film *Crazy Glue* (1998), based on a story by Etgar Keret, one of the most popular authors in Israel. (Many of his short stories have been adapted into films.) Keret's work inspired another puppet animation short by Rosenthal, *A Buck's Worth* (2005), about the suicide of a homeless man. *A Buck's Worth* was used as proof of concept for the animated feature film *\$9.99* (by Tatia Rosenthal and Etgar Keret, 2008). The feature reproduces the short film as its opening scene, using higher-budget puppets and settings. An Israeli-Australian production, *\$9.99* was shot in New York. Dave Peck is unemployed and devotes himself to the meaning of life. The film is set in Sydney and focuses on the problems of Dave's family and neighbours in order to represent the hopes and doubts of postmodern life. The silicone puppets are realistic, and their attitudes portray the characters' multifaceted psychology. The puppets and settings are sometimes augmented by CGI. Rosenthal said: [T]he biggest criticism from people who find it not to their taste [is that they] think that the script is such an adult drama, it should have been done live-action It's a better film in puppet animation, because there are fantastical elements, and there's a certain level of conceptualism or symbolism in the characters, in the behaviour and conflict, and putting everything in one world that is a little fantastical and has its own rules makes the piece more cohesive. → <https://www.laweekly.com/9-99-tatia-rosenthals-mighty-tenner/>, retrieved 28 July 2021.

production “\$9.99” in 2008. Dave Peck is unemployed and devotes himself to the meaning of life. The film is set in Sydney and focuses on the problems of Dave’s family and neighbors to represent the hopes and doubts of postmodern life.<sup>253</sup>

The comics collective Actus Tragicus, founded in 1995 by Rutu Modan and Yirmi Pinkus, bringing in Batia Kolton, Itzik Rennert, and Mira Friedmann, launched an era of experimentalist adult comics. Rutu Modan’s graphic novel, *Exit Wounds* (2007), which won the 2008 Eisner Award, tells the story of a female soldier who searches for the body of her lover, who was killed in a terror attack during the second intifada.



*Exit Wounds* © 2007 Rutu Modan

Modan also illustrated the children’s book, “*Dad Runs Away with the Circus*” (2004), written by Etgar Keret.

<sup>253</sup> Luke Y. Thompson. “\$9.99: TATIA ROSENTHAL’S MIGHTY TENNER”. *LAWeekly* (2009): <https://www.laweekly.com/9-99-tatia-rosenhals-mighty-tenner/> (Retrieved 28 July 2021).

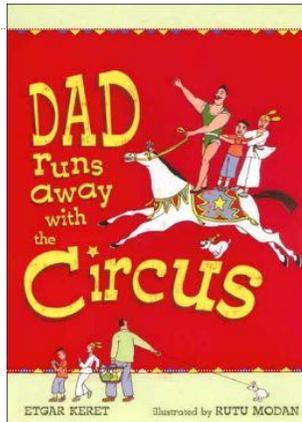
**Commented [103]:** Maybe add:

Ilana Zeffren was born in 1972, in the small town of Rehovot, Israel, and grew up in the even smaller town of Ashkelon. In 2005 she Published "Pink Story," a graphic novel telling the story of the gay and lesbian community in Israel through the events of her own story.

Since then she has published comic strips and stories in newspapers, magazines, and literature anthologies and has participated in international and Israeli comics group exhibitions. Between 2006 and 2013, she wrote and drew "Rishumon," a personal column in comics, in *City Mouse*, a local entertainment magazine. A collection of the columns was published as a book in 2014. These days she is doing a weekly caricature starring her cats, Rafi and Spaghetti, in *Haaretz* weekend magazine, published as a book in 2015. She is also the author of a comics blog on the *Haaretz* website. <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/contributor/ilana-zeffren>

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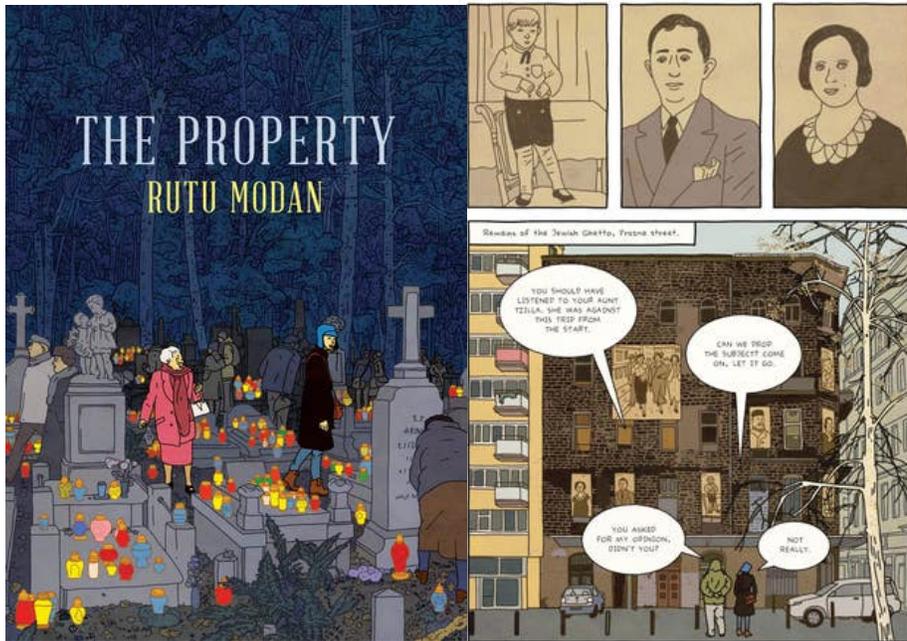
*Dad Runs Away with the Circus* (2004) © Rutu Modan and Etgar Keret

Rutu Modan's 'The Property' tells the story of a grandmother who fled Poland during World War II and returns to Warsaw with her granddaughter to reclaim her family's property, was chosen by Amazon as one of the best graphic novels of 2013.<sup>254</sup>

Commented [I04]: Maybe add: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmad\\_Nady](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmad_Nady)  
Then Donya Maher's graphic novel *The Apartment in Bab El-Louk*, created in collaboration with the illustrators Ganzeer and Ahmad Nady.  
Transition to Ganzeer

Commented [AH105]: Maybe add her new graphic novel: "Tunnels"  
When a great antiquities collector is forced to donate his entire collection to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Nili Broshi sees her last chance to finish an archeological expedition begun decades earlier—a dig that could possibly yield the most important religious artifact in the Middle East. Motivated by the desire to reinstate her father's legacy as a great archeologist after he was marginalized by his rival, Nili enlists a ragtag crew—a religious nationalist and his band of hilltop youths, her traitorous brother, and her childhood Palestinian friend, now an archeological smuggler. As Nili's father slips deeper into dementia, warring factions close in on and fight over the Ark of the Covenant! Backed by extensive research into this real-world treasure hunt, Modan sets her affecting novel at the centre of a political crisis. She posits that the history of biblical Israel lies in one of the most disputed regions in the world, occupied by Israel and contested by Palestine. Often in direct competition, Palestinians and Israelis dig alongside one another, hoping to find the sacred artifact believed to be a conduit to God. Two time Eisner Award winner Rutu Modan's third graphic novel, *Tunnels*, is her deepest and wildest yet. Potent and funny, Modan reveals the Middle East as no westerner could.  
<https://drawmandquarterly.com/tunnels>

<sup>254</sup> [Yuval Saar](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/culture/.premium-israeli-feted-at-french-comics-fest-1.5318888). "Israeli's Graphic Novel Feted at International Comics Festival in France."  
<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/culture/.premium-israeli-feted-at-french-comics-fest-1.5318888>



In 2021, Modan launched her 3<sup>rd</sup> graphic novel, “Tunnels” about an amateur archeologist, Nili Broshi, who, motivated by the desire to reinstate her father’s legacy as a great archeologist, enlists a ragtag crew—a religious nationalist, her traitorous brother, and her childhood Palestinian friend, in search of the Ark of the Covenant. Backed by extensive research into this

real-world treasure hunt, Modan biblical Israel as one of the most disputed regions in the world in direct archeological competition.<sup>255</sup>



Tunnels Preview © 2021 Rutu Modan

In 2013 Modan and Pinkus launched Noah Books, a project to revivify a library of classic Israeli children's books, beginning with Modan's "Uri Cadduri" a contemporary remake of "Uri Muri" and Pinkus's three adventures of "Mar Gazmai Habedai", ("Mr. Fibber"), a character created by Lea Goldberg with illustrations by Arie Navon, appearing in weekly installments in "Davar for Children": When Mr. Fibber accidentally drops his coin in a jar of juice, he magically

<sup>255</sup> <https://drawnandquarterly.com/books/creation/tunnels/>

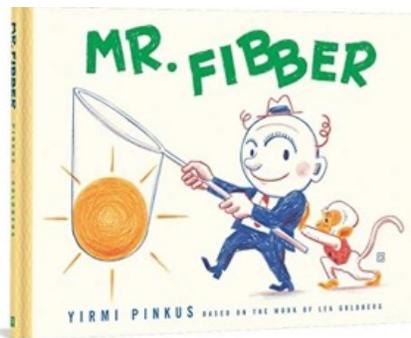
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shrinks so he can dive down and retrieve it. On a walk one day, he stumbles upon a giant dog with a smokestack on its back, towing a train behind it — and hitches a ride. And just to make sure it stays sunny and warm during his vacation; he catches the sun in a net and packs it in his suitcase!<sup>256257</sup>



Uri Kaddur (2013) © Rutu Modan



Mr. Fibber (2014) © Yirmi Pinkus, Frantagraphics, Sifriyat Poalim.

In 2005, according to the BBC, the US Military Special Operations Command began soliciting creators to develop a propaganda comic book series for the Middle East. In a vain, cynical attempt to win the hearts and minds of young Arabs, the US Army stated, “in order to achieve long-term peace and stability in the Middle East, the youth need to be reached. A series

**Commented [AH106]:** Maybe add: Veteran Israel illustrator and animator Yossi Abulafia, who used to head the animation department at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, will receive a special honor at the festival. Abulafia has created animated clips for television shows in Israel and abroad, including the 1970s Israeli satirical program "Nikui Rosh," worked as an illustrator for several newspapers and created an animated video of the Hebrew children's book "Nehama the Louse" (Hakina Nehama ). <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5152339>

<sup>256</sup> Yuval Saar. "Zap! Bang! Boom! Israeli Comics Pioneers Launch Kids' Books Line Rutu Modan and Yirmi Pinkus bring their flair for the graphic to a new children's publishing house, Noah's Library." *Haaretz* (2013): <https://www.haaretz.com/life/books/.premium-israeli-kids-get-new-comics-1.5298296>

<sup>257</sup> Kevin Haworth. "The Comics of Rutu Modan: War, Love, and Secrets". *University Press of Mississippi*. January 2020. DOI: 10.14325/mississippi/9781496821836.001.0001

of comic books provides the opportunity for youth to learn lessons, develop role models, and improve their education. However, the project ultimately never got off the ground largely due to emerging competition within a similar American style superhero genre from regional comics publishers including “AK Comics”.

AK Comics formed in 2002, the first Middle Eastern superhero comics production company. Its goal was “to fill the cultural gap created over the years by providing essential Arab role models, in our case, Arab superheroes.”<sup>258</sup> They created four heroes: Zein, a philosophy professor and the last of an ancient line of pharaohs. He lives in Origin City, which resembles Cairo, and uses ancient technology and superpowers to thwart evildoers. Aya, a law student driven to fighting crime when her mother is wrongly accused of murdering her father. She has no superpowers of her own but fights for justice and gender equality. Jalila, a female scientist who at the age of 16 survived an explosion at the Dimodona nuclear plant (a reference to the Dimona nuclear plant used by Israel to build its undeclared nuclear arsenal) and gained super-powers from the radiation. She protects the City of All Faiths (based on Jerusalem) from the warring Zios Army and the United Liberation Force. Rakan, a medieval warrior who survived a Mongol invasion of Mesopotamia and was raised by a saber-toothed cat. His country is constantly attacked by Mongols, Turks and Crusaders. Through the techniques of “sheba” (wisdom and peace) he is an invincible warrior. Rakan's most known enemy to date is “Chess

Commented [107]: Maybe talk about cultural imperialism, citing “How to read Donald Duck” Ariel Dorfman

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<sup>258</sup> BBC Staff. “US Army to Produce Mid-East Comic”. *BBC* (2005): [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4396351.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4396351.stm).

Master”, co-created by Rafael Albuquerque. Though the worlds they inhabit are meant to represent the Middle East and confront social issues, there is no mention of any character’s religion in the comics. The explicit absence of faith was, according to Dr. Ayman Kandeel, a way to keep one belief from looking better than another.<sup>259</sup> However, problems arose with the immodest outfits of the female characters which upset conservative regional values as well as the lack of reliance of local Arab talent.<sup>260</sup>

*Teshkeel Comics* was a comics platform launched in Kuwait in 2003 by Dr. Naif Al-Mutawa, who led *The 99* – the first superhero series inspired Islamic archetypes – to provide young Muslims with Islamic role models to dissuade them from Islamic extremism and help show the world the universal values of Islam, in part to counteract the islamophobia that spread in the aftermath of 9/11.<sup>261</sup> It began as a comic book series in 2007, even partnering with comic franchise DC Comics to create a Justice League crossover mini-series, and expanded to a multi-million-dollar animated series and franchise in 2009. The animated series aired in nearly 70 countries. Though *The 99* was initially banned in Kuwait as well as Saudi Arabia after it

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<sup>259</sup> Frederick Luis Aldama. “AK Comics” *Planetary Republic of Comics* (2015).

<sup>260</sup> Jehanzeb Dar. “A Critique of Muslim Women in Comics – AK Comics’ Jalila and Aya”. *Fantasy Magazine* (2006).

<sup>261</sup> Al-Mutawa, Naif. [“Why I based superheroes on Islam”](#). *BBC*. July 2, 2009.

was issued a fatwa by the Grand Mufti, Dr. Naif Al-Mutawa challenged this fatwa in clerical court, proving the virtues of *The 99* and lifting the bans.<sup>262</sup>



*The 99* © Dr. Naif Al-Mutawa.

In 2006, social entrepreneur Suleiman Bakhit, known for his philanthropic initiatives in the Arab world and as the son of former Jordanian Prime Minister Marouf al-Bakhit, founded Aranim Media Factory. Bakhit's work focused on countering/preventing violent extremism (CVE/PVE) perpetuated by Islamic extremist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeada, who use the hero narrative to incite young men wage violent outer jihad, through localized comic superheroes and social games. In 2010 Bakhit published more than 1.2M comics reaching more than 3M youth in Jordan, which were classified as s by the Ministry of Education to complement school curricula. After issues concerning the depiction of the Hashemite government, the initiative was re-launched in March 2016, publishing more than 500K copies to 4th and 5th grade children in Jordan.<sup>263</sup> Aranim produced comic books including *Princess Heart* – “a modern

<sup>262</sup> Al-Mutawa, Naif. "The latest challenge of 'The 99' superheroes is tackling a fatwa". *The National*. April 26, 2014.

<sup>263</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/people/suleiman-bakhit>

re-telling of *1001 Nights*“, “Section 9” – a series based on Jordan’s real-life all-female counter-terrorism team, and *Element Zero*, “a kind of Arab James Bond” which was later adapted to an animated web-series.<sup>264</sup> The company also released a social game Happy Oasis described as Farmville meets the Arab Spring.<sup>265</sup>

In 2007, in a partnership between the UAE Ministry of Education and the Watani Al Emarat Foundation created “Ajaaj” – meaning “Sandstorm” in Arabic – the first Emirati comic book superhero, in a successful effort to popularize and preserve Emirati, Arab cultural and moral heritage in the next generation. The character, a mysterious figure who flies around in a cloud of sand, performing good deeds and teaching traditional values, is not human, said to be “of the desert”, which is meant to help Arabic children realize their own roots. In 2008, Watani produced Ajaaj as a theatrical performance and later scaled to animation.<sup>266,267</sup>

The “Silver Scorpion” is a Syrian superhero created in 2010 from a collaboration between Liquid Comics, the Open Hands Initiative — a non-profit dedicated to improving people-to-people understanding and international friendship through cultural and educational exchange — and 26 American and Syrian youths with disabilities, who were asked to create a superhero who reflects what they have always wanted to see in a comic book. Silver Scorpion was cross-cultural hero promoting tolerance, inclusion, and equality in a region that

**Commented [108]:** Maybe add:  
Artist Ali Kashwani illustrated a comic book based on the real-life story of Salim the Flag Martyr, who was killed by Iranian invaders on the island of Greater Tunb in 1971.  
<https://www.thenationalnews.com/uae/emirati-artist-brings-legendary-story-of-uae-martyr-to-life-1.252410>

<sup>264</sup> JS Rafaeli. “The Jordanian Cartoonist Trying to Tackle Extremism with Comic Books”. *VICE* (2015): <https://www.vice.com/en/article/5gjmjd/suleiman-bakhit-profile-js-rafaeli-395> (Accessed 30 November 2021).

<sup>265</sup> Charlie Faulkner. “Why Jordanian comic book author Suleiman Bakhit was a true Arab superhero”. *The National* (2019).

<sup>266</sup> Chris Anderson. “Desert stormers: a brief history of Arab comic superheroes”. *The National* (2012).

<sup>267</sup> Amal Belhoul. “A Round of Applause for AJAAJ - the UAE’s First Superhero”. *Al Bawaba* (2008).

desperately needs heroes. *The Silver Scorpion* was honored at the 2010 Clinton Global Initiative and debuted at the Dar al-Assad Opera House in Damascus in 2011. In 2012, the comic was transformed into an animated version, broadcast in partnership with MTV Voices.<sup>268</sup>



Artwork by Mukesh Singh & Liquid Comics © 2011 Open Hands Initiative.

In 2008, Magdy El Shafee published *Metro*, Egypt's first adult graphic novel. *Metro* tells the story of a young software designer, who robs a bank after running afoul of a loan shark in a corrupt and dangerous Cairo. Shortly after publication, El Shafee's publisher, *Malameh*, was raided by the police and copies of *Metro* were confiscated. Following this incident, *Metro* was banned for "offending public morals". After a long trial in 2012, *Metro* was republished in Egypt.<sup>269</sup>

<sup>268</sup> Claire McCormack. "Can a Disabled Muslim Comic-Book Superhero Save the World?" *TIME* (2011).

<sup>i</sup> An expression referring to the spectrum of [public opinion](#) in the [Arab world](#), often as opposed or contrasted to the opinions of Arab governments. Source: Thomas Friedman. "Under the Arab Street". *NYTimes* (2002).

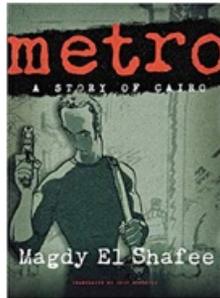
<sup>269</sup> "Metro A Story of Cairo: A story of pilgrimage". *Arab Comix Project; Humboldt State University* (2012).

**Commented [109]:** Maybe talk about Tarke Shain  
Could use Shain's point about self-censorship to discuss the subject and how it would be applied to Olive Branch Pictures or maybe address the issue under the methodology section  
→ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/features/arab-comic-artists-discuss-adversity-and-censorship>

Also Maybe talk about: Ganzeer | جنزير  
The political artist and activist known as Ganzeer - meaning "chain" in Arabic - is well known both for his graphic novel *The Solar Grid*, and for his street art likened to the proficiency of UK-based street artist Banksy; he has been said to reject the label of "street artist", though, as he feels that his work doesn't meet the standards of "real" street artists. Ganzeer has been credited as a part of the rise in previously scarce political street art after Egypt's 2011 revolution. He was detained in 2011 for distributing stickers of his "Mask of Freedom", featuring a head wearing a gimp mask with wings (Joshi).

As an artist working closely and interacting with the public, Ganzeer is breeding a new kind of comic-based activism in Egypt; he is creating a close bond to his readership and to activist communities, while choosing to retain a certain level of anonymity. This method of presentation, while not totally able to protect him from government intervention and censorship, has allowed him a certain level of artistic freedom that other artists featured here have not been afforded. Ganzeer seems to run by the expression "modern problems require modern solutions" - no matter how old these issues of censorship may be.

<https://arabcomixproject.weebly.com/censorship--persecution.html>



Metro © Magdy El Shafee

For many years the Arab creative producers self-censored their work to avoid trouble with the government.<sup>270</sup> The proliferation of social media and fall of dictatorial regimes including Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt during the Arab Spring (2010-2012), weakened censorship and expanded the use of comics and cartoons to communicate the messages of the “Arab street”.<sup>271</sup> YouTube and social media became the main platform for Arab animation artists to distribute their political works during the ‘Arab Spring’ in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East since 2011.

In 2006 “3alarasi” (“علي راسي”) emerged as a studio for animated cartoons, caricature, audio productions, and articles, with users generated & sharing of content: Games, videos, audios and photos, with many social networking features. “3alarasi” literally means “on my

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<sup>270</sup> Tariq Alrimawi. “The Arab Animation Spring: How Have Arab Animation Artists Used the Power of YouTube and Social Media in Response to the Recent Arab Revolution?”. *International Conference on Illustration & Animation* (2013).

<sup>271</sup> Emanuela De Blasio, “Comics in the Arab world: Birth and Spread of a New Literary Genre”. *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* (2020). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5209/ange.67162>

head” and colloquially means “I accept with great pleasure” in local Jordanian dialect.<sup>272</sup> The show is about two Jordanians, 3awad Abu Shiffah known as “M3allem”, and his friend Jabr Qawanis, who share a life of mayhem revealing the realities of Jordanian life through ironic and controversial comedy and behavioral observation.



Enta M3ALLEM © 3alarasi 2006

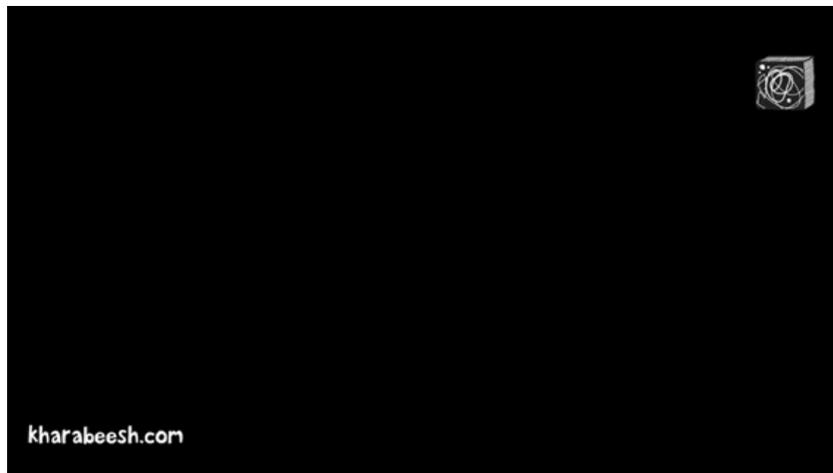
<sup>272</sup> Animation, and User Generated MultiMedia Content Social Network.  
[أضيف تعليقا ARABCRUNCH 23 أغسطس 2008](https://arabcrunch.wordpress.com/2008/08/23/3alarasi-in-house-professional-cartoon-animation-and-user-generated-multimedia-content-social-network/) https://arabcrunch.wordpress.com/2008/08/23/3alarasi-in-house-professional-cartoon-animation-and-user-generated-multimedia-content-social-network/

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Enta M3ALLEM © 3alarasi 2006

The Arab animation studio “Kharabeesh” (‘scribbles’ in Arabic) started in 2008 as a small production house based in Aman, Jordan, producing social animated videos through simple quality animation, and then posting them on the internet for free to watch, claiming that Arab animation should not wait for funding and censorship from the Government and non-profit organizations.<sup>273</sup> The studio produced many satirical political clips and music videos featuring Arab political figures, which received significant international establishment news media attention during the Arab Spring and reached large audiences becoming one of the most popular Arab YouTube cartoon channels in the Middle East and North Africa.



“Angry Revolutionaries” © Kharabeesh

**Commented [110]:** Between January 30, 2011 and February 1, 2011, Kharabeesh released two animated shorts depicting then Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak addressing the Egyptian people following the ousting of Tunisian President Ben Ali. In the first animated video of the series, which as of April 8, 2012 has over 1,800,000 views on YouTube, Hosni Mubarak addresses the Egyptian people in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, a clear departure from the public speeches he had recently given at the time, which were noted to have been delivered solely in Modern Standard Arabic.[14] The caricatured Mubarak offers trivial solutions to the Egyptian people and pledges not to leave his position, before punched off his podium by a fist representing “the People.” In the second video of the series, Mubarak addresses an angry mob, ignoring their chants demanding that he step down. A week later, Kharabeesh launched the third and final video of the series, which shows Mubarak receiving phone calls of congratulations from his counterparts abroad. Kharabeesh has also produced videos satirizing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad,[15] the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces,[16] and Muammar Gaddafi.[17]

**Commented [AH111]:** Add founders behind Kharabeesh

**Commented [112]:** Add more about Kharabeesh’s other animated shows and expansion

Others well-known cartoon characters who reflect and lampoon Jordanian society include 3la Rasi’s Awad abu shefeh and Jaber Gawanes , or Khaffash, who “isn’t any other Bedouin” both produced by Kharabeesh

<sup>273</sup> Alrimawi, Tariq. “Issues of Representation in Arab Animation Cinema: Practice, History and Theory”. *Loughborough University* (2019): <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/14969>.

In 2013, 19-year-old Deena Mohamed published the first strip of her comic book hero *Qahera*, the “witty hijabi superhero who fights crime and prejudice on the streets of Egypt”.<sup>274</sup> In creating a strong yet feminine female hero, and a balance of modesty and justice, Mohamed delivered a character critical of Arab society and the unnecessary problems it creates for women under patriarchy and traditionalist values, including sexual harassment and gender discrimination. Deena’s Egyptian urban fantasy trilogy, set for English publication by Pantheon books in 2022.



*Qahera* © Deena Mohamed.

Marjane Satrapi’s “Persepolis” is an autobiographical series which depicts her childhood up to her early adult years in Iran during and after the Islamic Revolution. It was first published as an award-winning graphic novel and scaled to an animated feature film with a revenue of \$15.5 million. It helped expose an international audience to the perspectives of Iranians and women. *Persepolis* was initially banned in Lebanon after some clerics found it “offensive to Iran and Islam.” The ban was later revoked after an outcry in Lebanese intellectual and political

<sup>274</sup> Hope Grisby. (2014) “A New Feminist Movement? Middle Eastern Hijabi Women as Superheroes”. *Tel Aviv University* (2014).

Commented [113]: Add: Sha3bia “شعبية الكرتون”, Watani Salem (“وطني سالم”), Meaw (“مياالو”).

Commented [114]: Maybe talk about Deena’s 2nd graphic novel too

Commented [115]: Maybe add section about Ms. Marvel (Kamala Khan) muslim marvel superhero, muslim representation

circles.<sup>275</sup> Though it drew official objections from the Iranian government, the film was allowed to be screened in Tehran albeit with six scenes censored due to sexual content.<sup>276</sup> Additionally, in 2006 *Persepolis* became part of the cadet's curriculum at West Point U.S. Military Academy.<sup>277</sup>

Commented [116]: Maybe delete



*Persepolis* Cover & Trailer © 2005, 2007 Marjane Satrapi

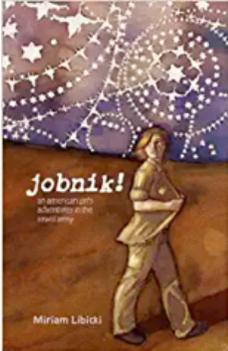
In 2008 Miriam Libicki published a graphic novel cataloguing her experience serving in the Israel Defense Force during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada. “An American-Jewish girl from a religious home with the tendency to fall in love with anything that moves, enlists in the Israeli army (IDF) in the summer of 2000, against everyone’s better judgement. Her Hebrew’s not great, she is shy and passive, and if that weren’t enough, the Al Aqsa uprising erupts one month into her service. Will

<sup>275</sup> [Rafei, Raed. "Lebanon: Iran revolution film 'Persepolis' unbanned". Los Angeles Times \(2008\).](#)

<sup>276</sup> [Stuart Williams and Hiedeh Farmani. "Rare Iran screening for controversial film 'Persepolis'". Agence France-Press \(2008\).](#)

<sup>277</sup> [Rana Foroohar, "Comic Relief". Newsweek \(2005\).](#)

Miriam survive threats of terrorism, the rough IDF culture, and not least, her horrible taste in men?<sup>278</sup>

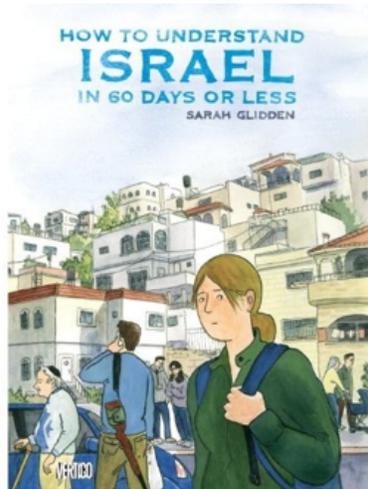


*Jobnik* © 2008 Miriam Libicki

In the autobiographical travelogue, “How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less”, Sarah Glidden is a progressive Jewish American twenty-something who is both vocal and critical of Israeli politics. When a debate with her mother prods her to sign up for a Birthright Israel tour, Glidden expects to find objective facts to support her strong opinions. During her two weeks in Israel, Glidden takes advantage of the opportunity to ask the people she meets about the fraught and complex issue of the Israeli-Palestinian issue which lead her to question her preconceptions.<sup>279</sup>

<sup>278</sup> Madeline Ashby. “Pimp: Jobnik!” (2008): <https://madelineashby.com/pimp-jobnik/> (Accessed 10 November 2021).

<sup>279</sup> <http://sarahglidden.com/how-to-understand-israel-in-60-days-or-less/>

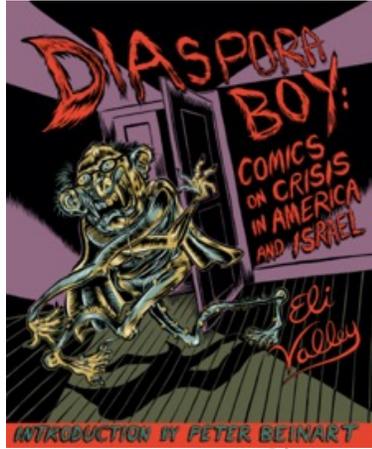


*"How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less" © Vertigo 2010 Drawn & Quarterly 2016*

"Diaspora Boy: Comics on Crisis in America and Israel" offers a profane, subversive, and humorous perspective on life in the Jewish Diaspora and its relation to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, reflecting the schisms, hypocrisies, beauty, and strangeness of Judaism in an age of unparalleled power and influence. Progressive Columnist and Professor of Journalism and Political Science Peter Beinart wrote that Valley's cartoons aren't only raucously funny. They constitute a searing indictment of the moral corruption of organized American Jewish life in our age." In contrast NYTimes columnist Bret Stephens described Valley's work as "Grotesque. ... Wretched" and former President of the Anti-Defamation League Abe Foxman called it, "Bigoted, unfunny."

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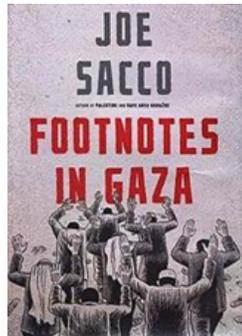
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*"Diaspora Boy: Comics on Crisis in America and Israel" © Or Books 2017.*

In "Footnotes in Gaza" Joe Sacco tries to understand what happened during the 1956 Suez Crisis in the towns of Khan Younis and Rafah in the Gaza Strip in which nearly 400 Palestinians were killed. "Footnotes in Gaza", published in 2009, along with Sacco's earlier work "Palestine", published between 1993 and 1995, are among the first examples of "comics journalism". Because it is already difficult to objectively portray reality in journalism and documentaries, using illustration to do so allows for more creative freedom. These works reveal comics to be an effective medium to address complex and controversial subjects including even the Israel/Palestine issue. However, as Dr. Chantal Catherine Michel notes, though Sacco demonstrates a critical distance from his interviewees by mentioning inconsistencies in their

accounts and forefronts his approach and research methods, "Footnotes in Gaza" influences the reader into believing that Sacco's depictions and interpretations are essential truths.<sup>280</sup>

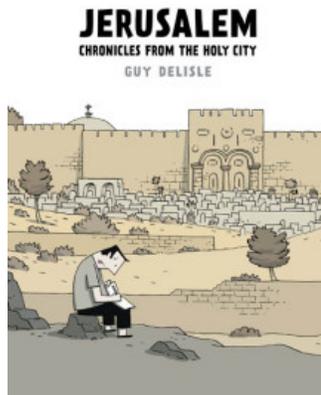


*Footnotes in Gaza* © Joe Sacco.

In *Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City*, comics journalist Guy Delisle documents the life of his family who have travelled there as part of his spouse's work with *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors Without Borders). Situated in the eastern part of Jerusalem, Delisle finds himself situated on the precise ground of conflict detailing the lives of people on land with a disputed border and what it means to revere a sacred city.

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<sup>280</sup> Michel, Chantal Catherine. "The Art of Persuasion and Propaganda". *Journal of Fonazione CDEC* (2013): p. 5.

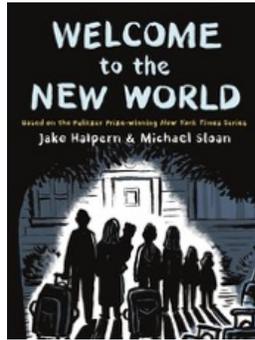


*Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City* © [Drawn & Quarterly](#) (2012).

Similarly, "[Welcome to the New World](#)," was a 2017, New York Times, Pulitzer Prize-winning series chronicling a Syrian refugee family as they adjusted to life in the United States, and "Madaya Mom" was a joint production between ABC News and Marvel, reporting the Syrian Civil Conflict through comics and incorporating it into a curriculum for students.<sup>281, 282</sup>



*Madaya Mom*  
© ABC News



*Welcome to the New World*  
© Macmillan/NYTimes

<sup>281</sup> Jake Halpern and Michael Sloan. "Welcome to the New World". *NYTimes* (2017).

<sup>282</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/International/fullpage/madaya-mom-42363064>

Waltz With Bashir (2009)  
© Ari Folman

Comics and animation are particularly useful mediums for retelling the people's stories which weren't visually well-documented, or due to the volatility of the environment as the case of Zabou Breitman and Eléa Gobbé-Mévellec's "The Swallows of Kabul" based on the best-selling, award-winning novel by Yasmina Khadra.



"The Swallows of Kabul" Trailer © Zabou Breitman & Eléa Gobbé-Mévellec 2019

"Waltz with Bashir" is a 2008 Israeli animated feature documentary written, produced, and directed by Ari Folman with Animation Direction by Yoni Goodman and Art Direction from David Polonsky. It depicts Folman in his search for lost memories of his traumatic experience as a soldier in the 1982 Lebanon War. It grossed over \$11 million against a production budget of only \$2 million and won a Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film. The film was banned in several Arab countries with its harshest critics in Lebanon. However, the film was screened in Beirut in 2009 for a 90-person audience and many other private screenings

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followed. Unofficial copies became available in the country as well.<sup>283</sup> The animation style of the documentary allows such realities of war and trauma to be expressed for the audience to understand its messages in unique, visceral ways. Folman and Polonsky cited Joe Sacco's work as a major influence and adapted *Waltz with Bashir* into a graphic novel in 2009.<sup>284</sup>



Waltz with Bashir © Ari Folman, Artificial Eye, The Match Factory (2009).

In 2009, Yoni Goodman directed "Closed Zone", a 90 second animation produced by Gisha – Legal Center for Freedom of Movement, calling for the opening Gaza's borders.<sup>285</sup>



"Closed Zone" © GISHA 2009

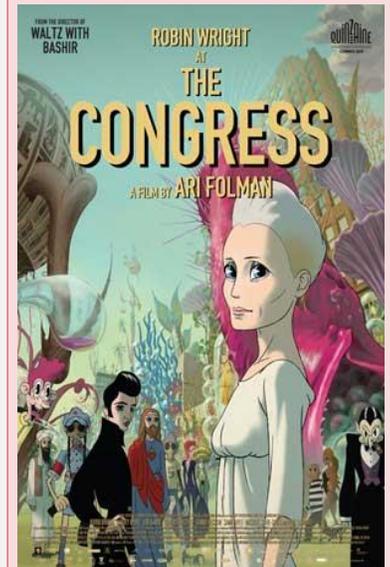
<sup>283</sup> Anderman, Nirit. "[Israeli film on Lebanon War 'Waltz with Bashir' shown in Beirut](#)". Haaretz (2009).

<sup>284</sup> Ari Folman (author), David Polonsky (Illustrator), *Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story* (Atlantic Books, 1 March 2009). ISBN 978-1-84887-068-0

<sup>285</sup> <https://gisha.org/en/new-short-film-from-the-animation-director-of-waltz-with-bashir-gaza-is-closed-zone/>

Commented [I17]: Add 2021 Anne Frank animated film

Commented [AH118]: Maybe add: In 2013, the Bridgit Folman Films Gang in co-production with Studio 352 in Luxemburg, Walking the Dog in Belgium, Bitteschoen and Studio Rakete in Germany, Studio Orange in Poland, and Snipple in the Philippines, produced the animated feature, "The Congress" based on *The Futurological Congress* by 1971 Polish-Jewish novelist Stanislaw Lem.



In 2019, Folman and Polonsky adapted “The Diary of Anne Frank” into a graphic novel and in 2021 the Bridgit Folman Films Gang produced “Where Is Anne Frank” the animated feature film.<sup>286</sup> The Anne Frank Fonds Basel, which was founded by Anne's father Otto Frank after the war, approached Folman in 2013 with the idea of an animation movie. Animation was deemed to be the most effective medium to appeal to a new generation and communicate the links between the Holocaust, discrimination, and antisemitism.<sup>287</sup>



“Anne Frank’s Diary” © Bridgit Folman Film Gang 2019

In 2013, the IDF produced “ [Hamas in Comics: Terror and Tyranny in Gaza](#)”, a comic book created for public relations, portraying how “Hamas has vilified the Jewish people, indoctrinated Gaza’s children and attacked Israel with suicide bombings and rockets.”<sup>288</sup>

<sup>286</sup> Peter Debruge. “Where Is Anne Frank’ Review: Ari Folman Uses Animation to Bring the Teen Martyr to the Modern World”. *Variety* (2021): <https://variety.com/2021/film/reviews/where-is-anne-frank-review-1235008278/> (Accessed 29 July 2021).

<sup>287</sup> “World: ‘Where is Anne Frank’: Animation debuts at Cannes”. *Deutsche Welle* (14 July 2021).

<sup>288</sup> Sam Morris. The Israeli military releases its first comic book: “Hamas in Comics: Terror and Tyranny in Gaza”. *Al Bawaba* (2013)

**Commented [119]:** Maybe add the Anne Frank animated feature film was first made in 1998 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAIRFyR6NyQ&ab\\_channel=AnneFrank%27sDiary-FeatureAnimatedFilm](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAIRFyR6NyQ&ab_channel=AnneFrank%27sDiary-FeatureAnimatedFilm)

Awarded the Children’s Jury Award at the Chicago International Children’s Festival. « The Film has moved me and I want to congratulate you for the high standard and sensibility in producing this film. I am sure it will be successful not only with the young audiences, but also for the elder generations. » Buddy ELIAS, President, ANNE FRANK FONDS, 1998 A LETTER BY Simon WIESENTHAL I have now viewed the English version of your film based on the Diary of Anne Frank. Thank you for sending me the tape. I must admit that at first had my doubts whether an animated film could do justice to Anne Frank’s Diary. I was therefore pleasantly surprised upon viewing it that the film doesn’t trivialize the story of Anne Frank and makes for exciting viewing. This depiction of the growing up of a vivacious young girl in very difficult and extremely threatening surroundings will touch the hearts of young viewers—and will hopefully lead them to be wary of all signs of collective hatred, racism and anti-Semitism. It is good that with such well-done animated film more young people can be reached than would be the case with the book alone. With best regards, Sincerely, Simon WIESENTHAL "No previous adaptations of Anne Frank’s Diary have done so with the imagination and sensitivity that characterize the animated film ANNE FRANK’S DIARY. The attendant music manages to be both unobstructive and haunting at the same time. This inspiring and poignant film is a remarkable tribute to Anne Frank." -Carol Ann Lee (Historian, author of 'Anne Frank: A biography') "...The highly realistic animation offers suspenseful touches and unusual points of view, and the music by Carine Gutlerner is excellent: spare and evocative." -Reader, Chicago " An animated version of Anne Frank’s famous diaries that makes her story easily accessible for a new generation without losing the power of the original text.(...) Most moving is Anne’s internal life, her reaction to their persecution, and subsequent life of total isolation, silence, terror and ultimately the positive and humanitarian attitude she is able to maintain. Complemented by cutting edge animation, the film’s most significant success is its ability to use the diary entries to create an Anne Frank who is compelling and endearing without being maudlin. " Yoshua Ford, Washington Film Festival " Animated "ANNE FRANK" retells story superbly". The movie is an achievement on several levels. Its aesthetic scheme is simple and unadorned enough to remind us that is a story of ordinary people thrust in into extraordinary circumstances, yet it’s also gorgeous enough to carry us through its feature length. Its slab of colors and simple but inviting composition suggest painting[... [20]

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“[Hamas in Comics: Terror and Tyranny in Gaza](#)” Source: [Scribd](#) (Accessed 12 July 2021).

In 1998 DreamWorks produced the animated musical “The Prince of Egypt” based on the book of exodus. It received an academy award for best original song and generated a revenue of \$148.6 million. DreamWorks consulted with Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Arab authorities to make the film more accurate and faithful to the original story. Jeffery Katzenberg, David Geffen, and Steven Spielberg led the production; three Jewish men. However, *The Prince of Egypt* was banned in the Maldives and Malaysia on the grounds that prophets cannot be depicted in media. In addition to the depiction of the prophet Moses, it was also banned in

Egypt for the unflattering depiction of Egyptian civilization and fallacy that Jewish slaves built the pyramids (Jews were enslaved in Egypt but they did not build the pyramids).<sup>289, 290</sup>



“The Prince of Egypt” Trailer. Copyright © Universal Pictures

In 2000, DreamWorks released “*Joseph King of Dreams*” to home-video by executive producers Penney Finkelman, Steve Hickner, and Jeffrey Katzenberg. It tells the story of Joseph from the Book of Genesis, who was sold to slavery by his brothers who were jealous of his prophetic abilities to analyze dreams and of his being their fathers' favorite and goes on to become second in command to the Pharaoh and the brothers redeem themselves and reunite.

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<sup>289</sup> Eltahawy, Mona. [“Egyptians disown celluloid ‘Prince’”](#). *The Guardian* (1999).

<sup>290</sup> Philippe Bohstrom. “Were Hebrews Ever Slaves in Ancient Egypt? Yes”. *Haaretz* (2016).



"Joseph King of Dreams" Trailer. Copyright © Paramount Pictures

The first Israeli animated feature film was, the 1961 stop-motion "Joseph and the Dreamer", directed, animated and produced by Polish-Australian-Israeli animator Yoram Gross (1926-2005) and his wife Alina."



English and Hebrew Movie Posters of Yoram Gross's "Joseph and the Dreamer" (1961)

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In 2012, American animator Nina Paley released a satirical animated music video visualizing the graphic history of conflict over “the holy land”, set to “The Exodus Song” composed and performed by Ernst Gold, with added lyrics by Pat Boone, sung by Andy Williams, as part of her work-in-progress feature film. By 2014 the scene had received 10 million views, with more viewers added during every news cycle highlighting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>291</sup>



“This Land is Mine” from *Seder Masochism*. Copyright © Nina Paley

After six years of work, a self-identifying anti-Zionist, atheist American Jew, Nina Paley, directed, produced and animated a 78-minute animated called “Seder Masochism” in 2018, a musical comedy that loosely follows a traditional Passover Seder, events from the Book of Exodus are retold by Moses, Aharon, the Angel of Death, Jesus, and the director’s own father.

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<sup>291</sup> Roz Warren. “How Nina Paley Made 'This Land Is Mine' Viral”. *The Forward* (2014): <https://forward.com/schmooze/203992/how-nina-paley-made-this-land-is-mine-viral/>

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But there's another side to this story: that of the Goddess, humankind's original deity. Seder-Masochism resurrects the Great Mother in a tragic struggle against the forces of Patriarchy.



Clip from *Seder Masochism*. Copyright © Nina Paley  
Full-length movie can be watched or downloaded for free here: <https://vimeo.com/263398514>

Due to her self-reliance, talent, and use of public domain for songs and distribution as well as friends and family, Paley was able to produce *Seder Masochism* for a mere \$20,000.<sup>292</sup>

Spacetoon, established in 2000, is a free-to-air Arabic kids' channel that broadcasts to more than 22 countries, reaching more than 200 million viewers. Spacetoon offers animated and live-action content tailored to the region's sensitive cultural values and owns the rights of the largest library of Arabic-dubbed animated cartoons in the Arab world.<sup>293</sup> By June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Spacetoon's YouTube channel had over six million subscribers and 400 million views, and 26.8

<sup>292</sup> Nina Paley. "PRESS RELEASE: Seder-Masochism to go Public Domain January 31, 2019): <https://sedermasochism.com/2019/01/02/press-release-seder-masochism-to-go-public-domain-january-31-2019/>

<sup>293</sup> "Spacetoon, ALC Announce New Broadcast and Licensing Deals for MENA". *Animation World Network* (2016).

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million hours of watching with numbers increasing increase daily.<sup>294</sup> The dubbing of predominantly American and Japanese cartoons has presented challenges for companies like Spacetoon both in regard to language with the use of Modern Standard Arabic (*al-Fusha*) versus popular dialects like Egyptian or Levantine (*Shami*) or local dialects as well as the morality of content. *Al-Fusha* has commonly been used for dubbing foreign cartoons in the Arab world but can come across like the equivalent Shakespearean English which can sound unnatural and be challenging for kids. The content has often been altered to accommodate the cultural and religious values of the Arab world, which can distort the plot.<sup>295</sup>

In 2001, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia issued a fatwa banning the Pokémon franchise due to its reference to evolution, and for promoting gambling, the Shinto religion of Japan, Christianity, Freemasonry and “global Zionism”.<sup>296, 297</sup> However, despite the fatwa, Pokémon and other American and Japanese cartoons of the 90s and early 2000s became beloved by children across the Middle East. As an example of this popularity, Al Salam Media Group, a production company based in Kuwait, produced several theatrical musicals based on American and Japanese cartoon characters including a Pokémon-Detective Conan crossover musical, “Conan in the Land of Pokémon”.<sup>298</sup>

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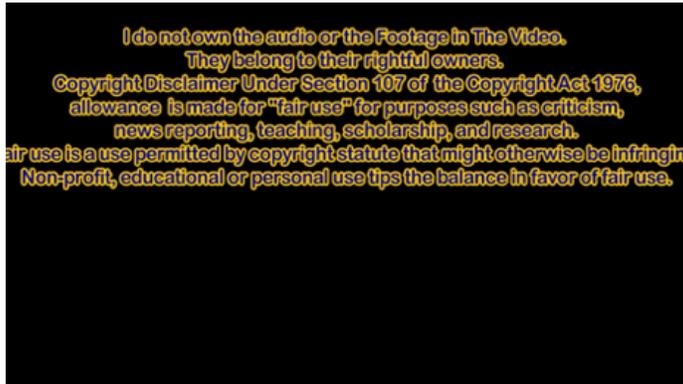
<sup>294</sup> Karishma Hingorani. “Spacetoon records 6m subscribers and 2bn views on YouTube”. *Digital Studio Middle East* (2021).

<sup>295</sup> Sarah Ahmed. “Generation Spacetoon”. *Jaffat El Aqlam* (2016).

<sup>296</sup> “Saudi revives fatwa on ‘Zionism-promoting’ Pokemon”. *The Times of Israel* (2016).

<sup>297</sup> Molly Kishikawa. “Why Pokémon Was Banned in Saudi Arabia and Other Arab Gulf States”. *CBR* (2021).

<sup>298</sup> “Conan in the Land of Pokemon”. *Al Salam Media Group*. Kuwait (2001): [Full Play Recording \(Arabic with English subtitles\)](#).



"Conan in the Land of Pokémon". Copyright © Al Salam Media Group

Randa Ayaoubi, a Harvard MBA graduate, later voted 11th most influential woman in the Middle East 2007 (*Economist Magazine*), 12th most influential woman in the MENA 2010 (*Arabian Business*), and 25 Most Powerful Women in Global TV 2014 (*Hollywood Reporter*), founded Rubicon Holding Group in 1994 in Amman, Jordan.<sup>299, 300</sup> Ayoubi's goal was "to produce more programs so in the future children in Europe, the US or Asia might grow up watching Arabic shows dubbed in English, rather than the other way round" and foster an "Arab Renaissance".<sup>301</sup> Rubicon produced successful animated content including "Tareq wa Shireen" (2010) and "Ben & Izzy" (2008), an animated series about two boys, one American and one Jordanian, who meet at an archeological dig in Jordan and are transported back in time, which aired on Cartoon Network Arabia, and animated feature film, *Postman Pat: The Movie*.

<sup>299</sup> David Caspi. "25 Most Powerful Women in Global TV". *The Hollywood Reporter* (2014); Iss. 34, pg. 2.

<sup>300</sup> "200 Most Powerful Arab Women 2014". *Forbes* (2014).

<sup>301</sup> "My world: Randa Ayoubi on Arabic TV for Kids". [StoryBook News](#) (2011).

**Commented [120]:** Maybe talk more about "Ben and Izzy" was an act of animated cultural diplomacy: Ben & Izzy is a Jordanian computer-animated children's television series, directed by Glenn Chaika. Produced by Rubicon, a rising educational and CGI animation company, the series followed the adventures and friendship of two preteen boys. Ben and Izzy are from the United States and Jordan respectively; a desert genie called Yasmine takes the form of a young girl. Although produced in Jordan, it was primarily released in English for international purposes before its official Arabic dub in 2008. The series was created primarily to entertain, but also to educate viewers about aspects of Arab history and how it affected Western culture. These are reflected in the bond between the American Ben and the Jordanian Izzy. Paolo Parmiggiani and Giannalberto Bendazzi. "Animation, A World History. Volume III, Contemporary Times". CRC Press, Focal Press, Taylor & Francis Group (2017).

Maybe add that it was heavily supported by Queen Rania who's American and Palestinian

However, Rubicon's animation division fell apart due to short-term-cash-flow problems when they bit off more than could chew", betting on a feature film production deal based on Sir Paul McCartney's *High in the Clouds* (which fell through) and investing \$1 billion in a theme park based on par with Disneyland, without a big enough cache of intellectual property, fanbase, and revenue stream, to sustain the initiatives.<sup>302</sup>



"Ben & Izzy" Copyright © Rubicon Group Holdings.

Emad Hajjaj is a modern political cartoonist born in the Jordan-controlled West Bank in 1967. His work, which covers a wide range of topics including Arab affairs, gender equality, and civil society has been published by Al Rai, Alaraby Aljadeed, Alghad Newspaer, and the Jordan Times daily and earned him two Dubai Press Awards and recognition in Arabian Business Magazine's "500 Most Influential Figures in the Arab World". In 1993, Emad created "Abu Mahjoob", a cartoon character inspired by his father, who represents the common Jordanian man.<sup>303</sup> Through Abu Mahjoob, Emad Hajjaj speaks to and for the people of Jordan about every day political, social, and cultural concerns. Since 2004, Abu Mahjoob has appeared on Jordanian TV as an animated character, produced by Tomandora Productions and Void Studioz. Though

<sup>302</sup> David Robb. "Jordan-Based RGH Entertainment Vows To Stay Open Amid L.A. Layoffs". *Deadline* (2015).

<sup>303</sup> Suha Maayeh. "Cartoonist captures the pulse of Jordan". *The National* (2008). Accessed 26 July 2021: <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/mena/cartoonist-captures-the-pulse-of-jordan-1.509051>.

Emad is often considered a “speaker of the people”, that doesn’t mean his work is appreciated by everyone. Hajjaj has been collared to court over a 2017 portrayal of Jesus Christ “disowning” the Greek Orthodox church leader, fired for an unflattering depiction of the King of Jordan in 2000, received death threats from ISIS, was sent to prison under the cybercrime law after publishing a caricature criticizing the Israel-United Arab Emirates peace agreement though he was reportedly released after four days.<sup>304</sup>



Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed after the Israel-UAE peace agreement Copyright © Emad Hajjaj 2020.

Emad’s brother, Osama Hajjaj, is also a popular cartoonist in Jordanian and Arab society, which he expresses his opinions and lived experience on through his characters “‘Ata’ and ‘Atwa’” (“عطا وعطوة”). He has worked for several newspapers including *Alquds*, newspapers *Al Mar’a*, *Al Belad*, *Al Dustour*, *Al Ittihad* of Abu Dhabi newspapers, *Al Rray*, *Charlie Hebdo*, as well as “Ala Al Hawa Sawa” on Jordan TV, CagleCartoons, and CartoonMovement.<sup>305</sup>

<sup>304</sup> The New Arab Staff. “Jordan releases cartoonist Emad Hajjaj after days of arrest for 'offending' the UAE”. *The New Arab* (2020).

<sup>305</sup> <https://cartoonmovement.com/cartoonist/658>



“Ata wa Atwa” © Osama Hajjaj 2020

Osama claims to have been fired for his cartoons of the King of Jordan and briefly jailed for cartoons depicting the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>306</sup>

In the early 2000s the Syrian government-run National Film Organization (NFO) started to show an interest in animation. As a result, several co-productions between state and independent studios saw the light of day.<sup>307</sup> The first Syrian animated Feature Film, “The Jar: A Tale From the East”, was produced in 2001, a story about a poor yet virtuous family who discover a lost treasure buried in a jar under their new home. In their quest to return the jar to its rightful owner, a jealous and greedy neighbor who has his eye on the jar foils their attempts to return it. An adventure ensues as the townsfolk try to solve the mystery of the jar.

<sup>306</sup> Rima Maktabi. “Brothers’ political cartoons break taboos”. *CNN* (2011).

<sup>307</sup> Stephanie Van de Peer. “Small Birds, Big Quest: How “The Jasmine Birds” Conveys Overcoming a Dictator and a Deadly Virus in Syria”. *Animation Studies* (2020): <https://blog.animationstudies.org/?p=3923>

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Omar Adnan Al Abdallat Cartoonist/Speaker/Producer Born in England 24/11/1978 Holds both Jordanian and British citizenship professional cartoonist since 2008 Worked in creative production and was a driver of creativity in many renowned companies, such as; Rubicon, Abu Mahjoob, Kharabeesh An active member of Cartoon Movement and Tomato Cartoons. Created several characters that became national symbols and are associated with Jordanians and youth, such as, Awad Abu Shiffah, Abu Samra, Al Sheikh Khafash, Al Zaeem Published over 2000 cartoons and 500 videos. Co-authored and co-produced several online shows such as Mone3a Fil Seen (Banned from China), a satirical Jordanian show starring Ahmad Hasan Al Zubi. Created and supervise a regionally acclaimed Youtube channel and its characters (3ala Rasi) that is ranked 8th in popularity regionally according to Forbes and has been awarded the silver award by Youtube Active on social media platforms and has over 100,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram Motivational and inspirational speaker who participated in many local, regional and international events, such as but not limited to TEDX Oporto in Portugal in 2015, Al Doha 8th convention held by Al Jazeera in 2014 Held several key exhibitions for his work in Jordan and abroad, amongst the organizers were, Jordanian Women Association, Jordanian Royal Court where he exhibited his works in front of HM King Abdullah II, also in Cairo Egypt and Jordanian governorates Advocate of women's and youth's rights and has been selected as a Jordanian icon in the campaign against violence against women by USAID, United Nations and Dutch Embassy. Trained and held many workshops on creative production, caricature, out-of-the-box thinking, drawing, social media engagement, tolerance and human rights and expression, amongst which we

The second animated feature film to come out of Syria was Razam Hijazi's "Thread of Life", which was produced by Tiger Production with the support of the Syrian Cinema Foundation. *Thread of Life* tells the story of a smart young student, Alaa, who is constantly tormented by his classmate, Obaida. His life at home is also difficult; he lives in poverty while his mother works to make ends meet with her sewing. For comfort, Alaa has a barnyard of animals and a special bird friend, Sesame. The struggles of his youth are common, as is his desire to skip ahead in life, to possible better times. When his despair reaches its depths, he is led by a wise old turtle into a tunnel. There, Old Woman Time offers him a magical gift: The Thread of Life. Alaa needs only to tug on the thread to move ahead in life; the length of his tug determining where in time he arrives. As he travels in fast forward through future experiences and events, Alaa realizes that perhaps he should be careful what he wishes for.<sup>308</sup>

The third Syrian animated feature film was *The Jasmine Birds* in 2009, directed by Sulafa Hijazi, Razam's sister. Sulafa Hijazi is a Director, visual and Multimedia artist from Damascus, Syria. Hijazi began her career as a writer and director of animation and other multimedia production, with a particular focus on children's education, social development. Her internationally award-winning animation and multimedia productions became very popular among Arab children and youth and distributed across major platforms. *The Jasmine Birds* focuses on a settlement of so-called jasmine birds, and the look of the birds is based on the common sparrow, a species pervasive in Damascus. The birds' fictional species, as jasmine

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<sup>308</sup> Trailer: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxHJaosxYU&ab\\_channel=cinemasyria](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxHJaosxYU&ab_channel=cinemasyria)

birds, is a direct reference to the past glory and beauty of Damascus, known as the jasmine city. As a common sparrow and an orphan, Gaith represents the everyman, the common people, whose lives and preoccupations are of no concern to those in power. Sulafa designed the bird characters had to be recognizable as local and Arab, for her young Syrian audience. She emphasized typical Arab physical characteristics such as thick brows for the male characters, while mascara and *kohl* eyeliner are used on the female characters' eyes. She also employed geometric, Islamic design and calligraphy was inspiration for the decorations and the texture of the backgrounds.<sup>309</sup> This sensitivity towards the diversity in meaning of the symbols and signs used in her animated film reveals a concern with local identity formation and displays the subtle impact designs have upon their narrative power. Hijazi was also a founding member of Spacetoon, 'the first free Arabic satellite channel for kids' in 2000. In 2010 she established Bluedar, a digital art production house, started between Damascus and Beirut and moved to Berlin. Hijazi published digital artworks criticizing the political and social oppression surrounding the Syrian Civil War and Refugee Crisis which have been featured by art institutions around the world.

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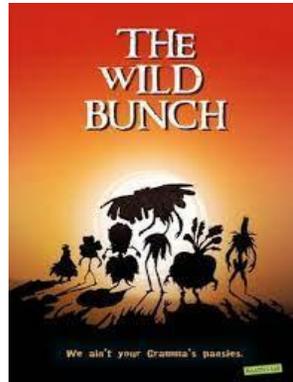
<sup>309</sup> Sulafa Hijazi. "Arab Identity in Syrian Animation". *AniFest* (2012): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcC0SdL8qh0>



*The Jasmine Birds (2009) Trailer © Tiger Productions*

In 2006 Animation Lab, an animation studio backed by Jerusalem Venture Partners (JVP) launched with an ambitious plan to make Jerusalem a hub of international animation, technology, and creativity. Animation Lab brought animation veterans from around the world to Jerusalem to work with budding Israeli talent, beginning with a feature film project, “The Wild Bunch”, a story about the struggle of Garden plants against an army of genetically modified corn, originally by screenwriter Phillip LaZebnick, known for *The Prince of Egypt*, *Pocahontas*, and *Mulan*. The project ultimately failed largely because of problems with the

script, hiring and firing multiple writers and directors, and did not commitment enough to local talent.<sup>310, 311, 312</sup>



“The Wild Bunch” Copyright © Animation Lab.

In 2012 couple Nir Gerber and Gali Edelbaum posted “Baruch and the Three Wishes” on YouTube, an animated skit about a turd pleading not to be flushed down the toilet. In return, the turd offers to grant Baruch three wishes, as in Pushkin’s famous tale of the fisherman and the golden fish. The clip attracted more than 250,000 views and positive buzz, leading the duo to post more clips, including “Migrating Birds,” about a flock of birds that goes astray because of the faulty navigation of a juvenile stoner-bird; “Hilik the Ghost,” about a ghost who gets fed up with haunting the showers of famous women since he’s unable to get sexual satisfaction; and “A Dog’s Life,” about a dog who sniffs at a pile of droppings, is unjustly accused of being

Commented [123]: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYZIAGknlPo&ab\\_channel=sesstudio](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYZIAGknlPo&ab_channel=sesstudio)  
2012 Ahmad Saleh  
2016 Ahmad Saleh

From the film 'Ayny – My Second Eye'

<sup>310</sup> Alex Williams, Steve Moore. “The Animation Artist who became a Politician”. *FlipAnimation* (2013).

<sup>311</sup> Talia Tsur: Animation Lab animator.

<sup>312</sup> Lewie Kerr: Animation Lab storyboard artist.

responsible for it, and gets into a shouting match with a city inspector. Nir and Gali were then contacted by the legendary “*Eretz Nehederet*” (“A Wonderful Land”) satire show, bringing their animated shorts to the Israeli mainstream in a segment called “*Pninat Litof*” (“Petting Corner”) (“פינת ליטוף”).<sup>313</sup>



“Pninat Litof” (“Petting Corner”) (“פינת ליטוף”) Copyright © Nir ve Gali, *Eretz Nehederet* 2021.

Nir and Gali later developed “*Sima ve Moshe*,” a series of short sitcoms centering on a stereotypical wife-beating, sunflower seed-spitting Beitar Jerusalem Football fan. *Sima ve*

<sup>313</sup> <https://www.mako.co.il/tv-erez-nehederet/season11-nir-gali>

Moshe received a negative reaction for making the country look bad and normalizing domestic abuse and was removed from YouTube.<sup>314, 315</sup>



“Moshe ve Sima” Copyright © Nir ve Gali 2014.

“Being Solomon” was a 2017 Israeli-Hungarian animated feature co-production directed by Hanan Kaminski. It follows the young King Solomon, the Arab Princess Naama and the Queen of Sheba, who join forces against the King of Demons, Asmodeus, who is trying to seize their kingdoms.<sup>316</sup> However, the film was criticized for straying too far from the biblical narrative.

<sup>314</sup> <https://www.atzuma.co.il/sima>

<sup>315</sup> [Hilo Glazer](#). “Hey Mom, Cartoons Aren't Just for Kids”. *Haaretz* (2014): <https://www.haaretz.com/don-t-pet-a-cow-man-1.5313576>

<sup>316</sup> <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3887158/>



“Being Solomon” Trailer Copyright © 2017 *Eden Productions & Cinemon Entertainment*.

In 1995, Kaminski co-directed the animated feature “The Real Shlemiel” AKA “Aaron’s Magic Village”, a co-production between Germany, Israel, Hungary, and France based on Nobel Laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer’s *Stories for Children*. It’s premise: “When the Almighty distributed wisdom and stupidity in the newly created world, all the stupidity of the world through the fault of a negligent angel fell on the small village of Helm, and since then every inhabitant of this village has been an example of world stupidity. Once his nephew Aaron comes to the inhabitant of this village *Shlemelyu*, all the wealth of which is the goat *Zlata*. And as luck would have it, it was at this time that the evil sorcerer decides to attack Helm with the

monster he created. Who, if not Aaron, will have to save the negligent inhabitants from the impending threat?"<sup>317</sup>



"The Real Shlemiel" Trailer Copyright © Home Productions 1995.

The UAE has emerged as a prominent source of animation content in the region.<sup>318</sup> In 2015, United Arab Emirates based animation studio "Barajoun Entertainment" produced and directed by Ayman Jamal, launched "*Bilal: A New Breed of Hero*", a full animated feature depicting the life of Bilal ibn Rabah, a follower of the Prophet Mohamad who was freed from slavery and became one of the first *Mua'dhin*<sup>i</sup> circa 632 AD.<sup>319</sup> *Bilal* won "Best Inspiring Movie" at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival and made a significant influence in the region and the world

<sup>317</sup> <http://israel-pozitiv.narod.ru/index/0-2>

<sup>318</sup> Shifa Naseer. "An Appetite for Animation in the UAE". *BroadcastPro Middle East* (2020).

<sup>i</sup> *Mua'dhin* – The one who performs the Muslim call to prayer

<sup>319</sup> Jane Horowitz. "[Bilal' review: Ancient story of a real-life Muslim hero is pretty but feels like theology class](#)". *The Washington Post* (2018).

for its technological and artistic success as well as in its aim to tell the stories of Islam in the modern world.



*Bilal: A New Breed of Hero* © Barajoun Entertainment 2015

Sitcom animations have since long been a powerful medium of social and political criticism in the Western world. Series such as *The Simpsons* and *South Park* gained huge popularity among children and adults alike, and inspired many adaptations around the globe. However, it took a long time for this popular format to reach the Arab world, a culturally conservative geo-cultural region often characterized by strict political censorship. Since the early 2000s, producers from several Arab countries including Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE create their own local sitcom animations, often characterized by hyper-reflexivity and intertextuality with local popular culture, containing up-to-date satirical

Commented [AH124]: Maybe add:  
"Political and social satire has been historically persistent in many Arab countries (Kishtainy 1985). Similarly to their peers in other post-colonial countries, Arab producers of parody blend global formats with local traditions when addressing and mediating national fissures (Baym and Jones 2012: 8–9). Ever since the emergence of the Arab Renaissance (al-Nahda) in the late 19th century, new mediums (papers, cinema, radio, television) and adapted genres and formats (novels, cartoons, movies, series) became forums for critical ideas." From: Omar Adam Sayfo. "Arab sitcom animations as platforms for satire". John Benjamins Publishing Company (2015): p. 1.

reflections on public life and even political affairs.

The Simpsons debuted on the Saudi Arabian MBC channel during Ramadan 2005.

Aware of the cultural sensitiveness of Arab audiences, the translators did their best to adapt the American series to the regional environment. Running as al-Shamshoon, Bart was renamed as Badr, while Homer's new name was Omar, and he drank soda instead of beer and ate barbequed Egyptian beef sausages instead of hot dogs. Stripped of culturally sensitive topics – many of them otherwise a source of amusement – al-Shamshoon failed to attract audiences (el-Rashidi 2005). Not much later, however, home grown animated sitcoms became one of the most popular and widespread genres in the Arab world.<sup>320</sup>

Emirati animator Mohammed Saeed Harib's ongoing cartoon series "*Freej*" – meaning "neighborhood" in Emirati Arabic – with the tagline "the fun old girls, is about four old Emirati women, Um Saeed, the wise linchpin; Um Allawi, the intellectual; Um Saloom, the benign dimwit; and Um Khammas, the crude one, trying to live their lives in a secluded neighborhood in the midst of an ever-expanding Dubai, tackling social issues their own way. Harib launched *Lammtara Pictures* in 2005 and *Freej* has enthralled audiences with its local authenticity and candid wit since its premier Ramadan 2006. *Freej* was inspired during a class at Northeastern University, where Harib studied art and animation. Harib explains: "in one of the classes at university our professor asked us to come up with a superhero "from your culture". (...). Our grandfathers used to go pearl diving for six to seven months. The female figures had to

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<sup>320</sup> Omar Adam Sayfo. "Arab sitcom animations as platforms for satire". *John Benjamins Publishing Company* (2015): p. 1.

raise six to seven kids in a very harsh financial environment and climate. She used to teach the kids, she used to work, so she was the superhero. On top of that she looked very unique, thanks to the mask she was wearing. Hence my first character was born.”<sup>321</sup>



Mohammed Saeed Harib's *Freej* © Lammtara Pictures 2021

*Sha'abiyat al Kartoon* premiered in 2008 by Haidar Mohammed of *Fanar Productions* and Amer Kokh of *Crazy Piranha Entertainment*. *Sha'abiyat*, a word that means “rural neighborhood” in Arabic, follows the lives of a group of families and individuals living in a small Dubai neighborhood. There are 24 characters from countries throughout Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent. The main characters are Shambee and Bo Mhayer. Shambee a middle-class Dad who can't get any respect due to his dim-witted ways. Bo Mhayer is a real Bedouin whose rugged views formed by the tough lessons of the desert, leave him both

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<sup>321</sup> J.F. “The Q&A: Mohammed Saeed Harib, animator” *The Economist* (2011).

confused by and slightly distrustful of Dubai. Through these characters, the series manages to examine some of the contentious issues bubbling beneath Emirati society. In contrast with *Freej*, *Sha'abiyat* exposes more of Dubai's melting pot with dialogue fusing local and regional dialect and English.<sup>322, 323</sup>

In one of the episodes, Shambee, one of the main characters, feels that his friends reject him on account of his Iranian-sounding family name, and he therefore decides to change his name to a "proper" Emirati name. However, he is incapable of acting like a real Bedouin and turns out to be a terrible Bedouin poet, and he therefore abandons his plan.



Haider Mohammed, creator of *Shaabiat Al Cartoon* © *Fanar Productions* 2021

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<sup>322</sup> Saeed, Saeed. "The animated series *Shaabiat Al Cartoon* has attracted a lot of fans, and with good reason". *The National News* (2011): <https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts/the-animated-series-shaabiat-al-cartoon-has-attracted-a-lot-of-fans-and-with-good-reason-1.583702>

<sup>323</sup> Omar Adam Sayfo. "Arab sitcom animations as platforms for satire". *John Benjamins Publishing Company* (2015)

Several Arab sitcom animations followed this path, among them *Yowmiyyat Bou Qatada wa Bou Nabeel* [The Diary of Bu Qatada and Bu Nabeel], and *Youm wa Youm* [Day and Day], which also reflect on the complex social mosaic of their country by using stereotyped visual presentation and different dialects. The diverse situational characters come together to create what Nichola Dobson calls a “constructed reality” (Dobson 2003: 86).<sup>324</sup> The animation also employs what Matheson defines as hyper-irony, a type of humor that prompts the audience not only to recognize the stereotypes that society has created, but also to laugh at themselves (Irwin, Conrad and Skolbe 2001: 108–25).

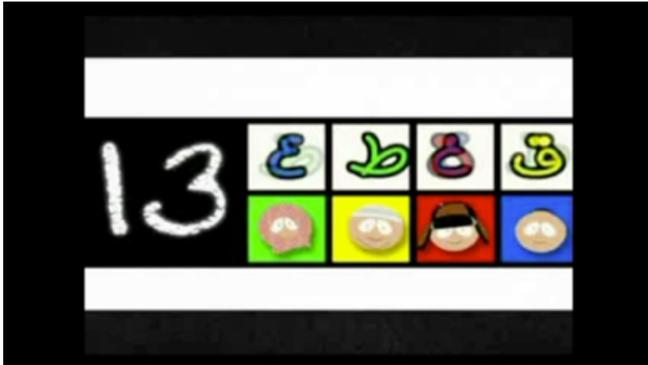
Commented [125]: Find pics/video

Commented [126]: Find pics/video

*Block 13* (Arabic: *قطعة 13*) is Kuwaiti adaptation of the American adult animated television series *South Park*. Produced by Sami Al-Khars and Nawaf Al Shammari of *Farooha Media*, *Block 13* was the first animated TV sitcom produced in the Persian Gulf, airing on *al-Watan TV* from 2000 to 2003. The series follows five young boys: Abboud, a chubby boy who dislikes his little sister Farooha, Azzouz, a good-hearted but slightly strange boy, Hammoud, a handsome teacher's pet, and finally Saloom, an impoverished child that sells bubble gum for money. The series dealt with many issues concerning the Kuwaiti population through humor, avoiding controversial issues such as sexuality or politics.<sup>325</sup>

<sup>324</sup> Omar Adam Sayfo. “Arab sitcom animations as platforms for satire”. *John Benjamins Publishing Company* (2015): p. 88.

<sup>325</sup> <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9908414/>



Block 13 Episode 1 ©  
Farooqa Media 2000

*Ahmed and Salim* is an animated web series created by Or Paz and Tom Trager – together known as “Sugar Zaza” – between 2009 and 2011 from an apartment in Herzliya, originally attracting over 2 million views and worldwide fans.<sup>326</sup> The series is a satirical parody on religious fundamentalists, or, as the creators define it: “A sitcom about terrorists”. The show drew critical attention from the Arabic press.<sup>327</sup> The United Arab Emirates has banned *Ahmed and Salim*.<sup>328</sup> Palestinian bloggers have denounced it. YouTube removed one of the first six episodes and warned the creators that it could ban the entire series if new episodes are too offensive. Despite the show’s offensive nature, many of *Ahmed and Salim*’s Facebook friends are in fact Muslims and many of the show’s fans are in Arab countries. The show developed a “cult following” in Israel and its debut episode, in which

<sup>326</sup> Guarnieri, Mya. ["No ordinary cartoon"](#), *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 June 2009.

<sup>327</sup> Ronen, Erez. ["Sitcom about terrorists' makes waves"](#), *Israel National News*, 14 April 2009.

<sup>328</sup> “Internet Filtering in the United Arab Emirates.” *Open Net Initiative* (2009): [https://opennet.net/sites/opennet.net/files/ONI\\_UAE\\_2009.pdf](https://opennet.net/sites/opennet.net/files/ONI_UAE_2009.pdf)

the father “bemoans the fact that his sons haven’t gone off on a suicide mission and killed lots of Jews,” attracted 600,000 viewers on YouTube.<sup>329</sup> Though the show appears very anti-Islamic, Trager and Paz claim to have no political agenda, just “making people laugh”.



Ahmed and Salim  
© Sugar Zaza 2009

M.K. 22 (Hebrew: מ.ק. 22 - Mem Qoph 22, which stands for "*machane keva*", ("permanent [military] camp"), while the words "Mem Qoph 22" might sound like "milkud 22", the Hebrew translation for the idiom catch-22 is an Israeli animated sitcom, revolving around the adventures of soldiers in a fictional IDF military base hosting the so-called "Israeli doomsday weapon", dealing with Israel Defense Forces behavior and culture, and with general issues and

<sup>329</sup> Nissenbaum, Dion. "[Humor or hate? Groups see Israeli cartoon differently](#)" Archived 3 November 2010 at the [Wayback Machine](#), *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, 23 April 2009.

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current events of Israeli society, derived from the experiences of the show's creators, Yaron Niski and Doron Tzur.<sup>330</sup>

The show debuted in March 2004 through production company Shortcut Playground, becoming the first prime time animated series in Israeli television, and was later rebroadcast partly censored on Channel 2.<sup>331</sup> The show won the Israeli Television Academy Award for Best Comedy Series.<sup>332</sup> Despite gaining popularity and critical acclaim, the negotiations for a second season failed, making the first 10-episode season the only one thus far.<sup>333</sup>

The series follows main characters: Corporal Shlomi Hanukkah: A narrow-minded Mizrahi "ars" and "kombinator" ("scam artist") and his friend, Corporal Itai Shulman, an Ashkenazi nerd. As well as their Commander, Gabriel Shukrun, a stupid, stubborn and manipulative officer, Michal Levinstein: a handicapped volunteer, generally hated by all other involuntary soldiers for her self-righteousness, and Abed Abu Jamal: an Israeli Arab living near the base. He appears to be Shukrun's humble friend, while secretly being a terrorist training bionic shahid sheep. In the show he represents the "fifth column Israeli Arabs" stereotype.

The show's initial goal was "to combine the style of *South Park* with local cult such

<sup>330</sup> Ruta Kupfer (2004-03-17). [נקמת הג'ובניקים](#) [Revenge of the jobniks]. *Haaretz* (in Hebrew). Retrieved 2021-10-03.

<sup>331</sup> Ido f. Cohen. "צה"ל פארק" ("IDF Park"). המסך המפוצל (2004): <http://www.tve.co.il/story/1925> (Accessed 4 October 2021).

<sup>332</sup> [List of Israeli Television Academy Award winners \(since 2003\)](#) (in Hebrew). israelfilmacademy.co.il. Archived from [the original](#) on December 30, 2008. Retrieved 2021-10-03.

<sup>333</sup> ["Negotiations for a second season of M.K. 22"](#) (in Hebrew). *nrg Maariv*. 2004-11-14. Retrieved 2021-10-03.

as [Giv'at Halfon](#)", an Israeli cult-comedy film produced in 1976, which tells the story of a reserves company, watching the Egyptian border in Sinai.<sup>334</sup>



"M.K. 22" © Keshet, Shortcut Playground 2004

The team also produced a cool music video:



"Always the Tune" by Sharona and Daniella Pick © Keshet, Shortcut Playground 2004

<sup>334</sup> ["The Tzahal we all loved to hate"](#) (in Hebrew). [Nana 10](#). 2003-06-03. Retrieved 2021-10-03.

Block 13, Ahmed and Sali, and M.K. 22 were all inspired both artistically and humoristically by *South Park*, created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone (who happens to be a Jew). *Sugar Zaza* created another animated series called *The Shtreimels*, which pokes fun at ultra-orthodox in a similarly crude manner. Beware very crude...



השטריימלים - The Shtreimels |  
Ep. 1 © Sugar Zaza 2010.

“Nahfat Ailetna” (“[نهفات عيلتنا](#)”) (lit. “Joke of Our Family”) is an animated comedy series that deals with many social issues and phenomena in daily Jordan life, following the funny situations and strange events of the Abu Raad family. The series was created in 2011 by Jordan-based animation studio *Sketch in Motion* led by Tamer Qarrain, a serial entrepreneur (Founder of Media Plus and BeeLabs).



In January 2021, Spacetoons launched “The Moshaya family Animation”, based on “The Moshaya Family”, a homegrown YouTube series that became the biggest family content creator in the Middle East consisted of 13 episodes (10-12 minutes each), with the daily life adventures and Arab values-based family content.<sup>335</sup>



*The Moshaya Family Animation* © 2021 Spacetoon Originals: [Trailer](#)

<sup>335</sup> “Spacetoon accumulates over 450m impressions of ‘The Moshaya Family Animation’”. *BroadcastPro* (2021): <https://www.broadcastprome.com/news/spacetoon-accumulates-over-450m-impressions-of-the-moshaya-family-animation/>

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Pan-Arab channels such as MBC3 and Al-Jazeera Children's Channel (JCC) have presented geolinguistically relevant series such as *Saladin: The Animated Series* as well as educational material.<sup>336</sup>

In 2017, *Our Family Life Blog/Website*, a leading parenting website in the Middle East, and *Digitales*, a Jordan based animation studio, partnered to pioneer an innovative animated sitcom model with writers include parents, educators, and therapists, called “*Abu Sanad’s Family Animation*”, a wholesome series which addresses family issues such as parenting and community living without shying away from taboo subjects and preconceived notions that permeate social and family systems.<sup>337</sup>



[Our Family Life حياة عيلتنا](https://www.digitalesmedia.com/portfolio/our-family-life/) © *Digitales Media 2021: Trailer.*

<sup>336</sup> Omar Adam Sayfo. “Arab Animation between Business and Politics”. In book: *Children’s Television and Digital Media in the Arab World*. Publisher: I.B. Tauris Editors: Naomi Sakr and Jeanette Steemers (28 July 2017).

<sup>337</sup> <https://www.digitalesmedia.com/portfolio/our-family-life/>

“Cinema Rex” is an Israeli 6-minute animated short created by Eliran Peled and Mayan Engelman, about a Jewish boy and an Arab girl who become friends through their discovery of the magic of films, designed to promote coexistence. The film, intended as a proof of concept for a feature-length film, won the CANAL+ Youth Award at the 2020 Annecy Film Festival. Cinema Rex was produced by the Makor Foundation for Film and Television, the Jerusalem Film and Television Fund, the Israel Film Fund, Mifal HaPais, the Ministry of Culture and Sport and the Israel Film Council and is currently seeking international investment under *Pink Parrot Media* and *Aldy Pai TLV*.



Cinema Rex © Pink Parrot Media and Aldy Pai TLV 2021.

In addition to *Manga Productions*, Saudi animation production has also stepped up in recent years with *Myrkott*, an Animation Studio based in Riyadh founded by Faisal Al Amer, Malik Nejer, and Abdulaziz al-Muzaini in 2009. *Myrkott* offers the irreverent, socially aware satire *Masameer*, a series about a Dog, and his two mentally unhinged, delusional friends in a corrupt and absurd Arabia, which was developed into an exceptional feature film. *Masameer*

**Commented [127]:** Proliferation of Israeli animation studios since 2004 including AniBoom (now defunct), the Hive Studio, Pil Animation, Plonter, IDT's animation studio DPSI Digital Production Solutions in Bet Shemesh (<https://www.israel21c.org/israels-crew-972-is-animated-about-cartoons/>) In 2004 Alex founded Crew 972, an animation production company based in Tel-Aviv, Israel.  
 → Crew 972 partnered with Snowball VFX to produce Vipo: Adventures of the Flying Dog. Transition to Snowball

Blend Studio, Crew 972, Gadget Studio, Handsup, PIL Animation, Le FrenchBulldog Animation Studio, Syndrome VFX, Carla Animations, Studio Aiko, WHITErabbit, NOGA and Studio FatCat. This long list continues into the game production sector, with companies like Corbomite Games, Funtactix, GameIS, Mytopia, Nitako, Nordeus, Playful Shark, Playtika, SpikySnail Games and We Create Stuff.

Poink Studio  
<https://www.studiopoink.com/about/>

Now defunct Israeli Pixall multimedia computer animation studio

began as a YouTube web-series in 2011 and in 2020, Myrkott produced “Masameer: The Movie”<sup>338</sup> and signed an exclusive 5-year partnership with Netflix to develop Arabic animated content.<sup>339</sup>



Myrkott co-founders Malik Nejer (left) and Abdulaziz al-Muzaini



Masameer: The Movie (Trailer) © Netflix 2020

## PART II: Olive Branch Pictures' Theory of Change

### Introduction

<sup>338</sup> Zaira Lakhpatwala. “Netflix exec on the 5-year partnership with Saudi animation studio Myrkott”. *Arab News* (16 September 2020).

<sup>339</sup> [Alex Dudok De Wit](https://www.cartoonbrew.com/feature-film/a-hit-across-the-arab-world-masameer-the-movie-is-now-on-netflix/). “A Hit Across The Arab World, ‘Masameer: The Movie’ Is Now On Netflix”. *CartoonBrew* (2020).

**Commented [128]:** What about Myrkotts other animated shows?

**Commented [129]:** Maybe add: The fact that cinemas were banned until 2017 made the potential for animation studios bleak, but Masameer: The Movie and the success it enjoyed changed a lot. It didn't just break even but actually turned in a decent profit. <https://www.cartoonbrew.com/feature-film/a-hit-across-the-arab-world-masameer-the-movie-is-now-on-netflix-189555.html>

**Commented [AH130]:** Maybe conclude “Part I” with state of Arab (and/or Middle Eastern) and Israeli Animation today, and run off the list of other animation, VFX, gaming studios in the region  
→ Maybe when presenting show a grid of all the logos and their (muted) show reels

Hundreds of Israeli Animated Shorts @ <https://vimeo.com/channels/israelimation/page:1>

As a solution to the problem of too many animations to write/talk about/present, I could select only the ones that really reflected or influenced Israeli culture or were important for other reasons

**Commented [AH131]:** Maybe add “Jeem TV” <https://www.facebook.com/page/235364646915/search/?q=حكيماان>

“The Israeli-Palestinian conflict” is regarded as one of the most intractable conflicts in history.<sup>340, 341</sup> Both peoples have legitimate claims of indigeneity to the same land.<sup>342, 343</sup> Both Israeli and Palestinian forces have tragically and unequivocally violated human rights.<sup>344, 345, 346,</sup>  
<sup>347</sup> Eight permanent status issues remain: mutual recognition, security and terrorism, borders, Israeli settlements, Palestinian freedom of movement, Palestinian refugees, control of Jerusalem, holy sites, and water rights.<sup>348</sup> The root cause of this conflict is the clash of competing narratives over identity and land.<sup>349, 350</sup> Decades of war shifted military power to Israel and the conflict towards public relations warfare in social and establishment media

**Commented [132]:** Maybe use the terms collective memory and conscious to describe the construction of national identity to relate back to memetics, jung, etc.  
→ Like how Jonah phrased it:  
→ Although there is a significant power imbalance between Israelis and Palestinians, another relevant factor is the role of nationalism. Israelis and Palestinians both genuinely feel a historical connection to the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, but they also uphold separate national consciousnesses. They have separate and distinct collective memories of trauma and have constructed separate national identities through those collective memories. Both peoples care how the sovereign state they reside in within the land represents their narrative and their identity and allows them to practice their right to self-determination independently. In other words, what Israelis and Palestinians are seeking are not just human rights, but also national rights.  
→ [https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/how-to-be-progressive-in-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict/?fbclid=IwAR0qP\\_5qBCyMYx2BjqfDBJ8OxqqO0fpfXqqY2ynbfUzc0KlplxfOHw2Vcsulafa](https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/how-to-be-progressive-in-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict/?fbclid=IwAR0qP_5qBCyMYx2BjqfDBJ8OxqqO0fpfXqqY2ynbfUzc0KlplxfOHw2Vcsulafa)

<sup>340</sup> Kelman HC. [The role of national identity in conflict resolution: Experiences from Israeli-Palestinian problem-solving workshops](#). In R.D. Ashmore, L. Jussim, & D. Wilder (Eds.), “Social identity, intergroup conflict, and conflict reduction”. *Oxford and New York*: Oxford University Press (2001): p. 187-212.

<sup>341</sup> Josef Olmert (2018) A Half Century of Occupation: Israel, Palestine, and the World’s Most Intractable Conflict, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 12:1, 113-115, DOI: [10.1080/23739770.2018.1454152](https://doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2018.1454152)

<sup>342</sup> Ukashi, Ran (2018) "Zionism, Imperialism, and Indigeneity in Israel/Palestine: A Critical Analysis," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol. 25: No. 1, Article 7. Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol25/iss1/7>

<sup>343</sup> Lawler, Andrew. “DNA from the Bible’s Canaanites lives on in modern Arabs and Jews”. *National Geographic* (2020).

<sup>344</sup> Jeane Kirkpatrick. “The Myth of Moral Equivalence”. *Impris* (1986).

<sup>345</sup> Omar Shakir. “A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crime of Apartheid and Persecution”. *Human Rights Watch* (2021).

<sup>346</sup> Joseph Krauss. “Explainer: Are Israel, Hamas committing war crimes in Gaza?” *APNews* (2021).

<sup>347</sup> Reuters Staff. “Amnesty International: Hamas committed war crimes against Gaza civilians”. *Reuters* (2015).

<sup>348</sup> Khalil Shikaki, Abdel Monem Said Aly, Shai Feldman. “Arabs and Israelis: Conflict and Peacemaking in the Middle East”. *Macmillan International Higher Education* (2013).

<sup>349</sup> West, Deborah L. “Myth & Narrative in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”. *Cambridge, Massachusetts*: World Peace Foundation, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (2003).

<sup>350</sup> Bülent Akkuş. “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from the Perspective of Identity Perception: An Analysis in the Framework of Institutions”. *The Journal of International Social Research* (2019): <https://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/articles/the-israelipalestinian-conflict-from-the-perspective-of-identity-perception-an-analysis-in-the-framework-of-institutions.pdf>

channels.<sup>351, 352, 353</sup> Palestinian and Israeli art, literature, theatre and film are used as “weapons of culture” to support competing narratives and promote ideal national images.<sup>354, 355, 356</sup> The

Abraham Accords suggest a future of Arab-Israel relations removed from the “question of Palestine”.

In her work, “Panels for Peace: Contributions of Israeli and Palestinian Comics to Peace-Building”, Dr. Chantal Catherine Michel describes the ideological struggle for the representation of ideas, played out in various graphic novel publications depicting aspects of the Israel/Palestine conflict. She asserts that few, if any, publications thus far have been able to separate themselves from their own cultural, political, and religious biases as well as reach the affected audiences, but maintains that if such a publication could be achieved, it would have a noticeable impact in peacebuilding due to the effectiveness of graphic novels as communication tools. According to Michel, graphic literature that does not offer a balanced view of the conflict and neglects the other side, contributes to an entrenchment of the conflict rather than to peacebuilding. She writes, “apparently, neither the great majority of the authors living inside Israel/Palestine, nor the ones living geographically (and culturally) outside of this conflict-area,

<sup>351</sup> Maayan Jaffe-Hoffman. “TikTok intifada is ‘just the tip of the iceberg’”. *The Jerusalem Post* (26 April 2021).

<sup>352</sup> Alex Ward. “The ‘TikTok Intifada’”. *Vox* (21 May 2021): <https://al-shabaka.org/mentions/the-tiktok-intifada/>

<sup>353</sup> “Thirst Trap”. *Rolling Stones* (2021).

<sup>354</sup> Shihabi, Muzna. “Palestinian Public Diplomacy: from Camp David II to the ICJ Ruling on the Israeli Wall”. Birzeit University (2006).

<sup>355</sup> Cannon, Ellen. “The BDS and Anti-BDS Campaigns: Propaganda War vs. Legislative Interest-Group Articulation”. [Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs](#) (2019).

<sup>356</sup> Yuval Ben-Ami. “About Face: Who best explains the case for Israel: an expert on the separation fence, or a rap group? A Foreign Ministry plan that aims to change the country’s advocacy efforts is proving controversial”. *Haaretz* (2005): <https://www.haaretz.com/1.4875039>

**Commented [133]:** Maybe show pictures from Israeli and Palestinian Poster archives

**Commented [134]:** Maybe add: “The flood of dis-and-misinformation as well as censorship in both social and establishment media on both sides of the conflict resulting from the 2021 Israel-Hamas Crisis, demonstrates the continued need for balanced media on the subject.”  
→ Sheera Frenkel. “Lies on Social Media Inflamm Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”. *New York Times* (2021).  
Find more sources

**Deleted:** positive

**Commented [135]:** Maybe take out

**Deleted:** . The state of Palestine remains a question

seem to be willing to produce comics that could contribute to peace-building or are capable of it. As it is, [Arab-Israeli Conflict Comics] are unfortunately mostly used as a cultural weapon against the other side.”<sup>357</sup> Moreover, in her essay “The Art of Persuasion and Propaganda”, Michel writes, “Being culturally involved in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict means for most people the impossibility of adopting a neutral position. This could, hypothetically, only be possible for those who aren’t culturally involved”.<sup>358</sup> Despite a long history of film and literature about the Arab-Israeli Conflict, none offer full representation and ideological balance both in front of and behind the camera, distributed to the necessary stakeholder audience to foment mutual understanding and trust and stimulate progress:

#### Olive Branch Pictures Inc

Olive Branch Pictures Inc is an ideologically balanced, representational animation studio for conflict mediation. OBP’s mission is to mitigate the cycles of hatred, violence, xenophobia, and propaganda surrounding large-scale social conflicts.



Olive Branch Pictures Inc. Logo. Designed by Don Daskalo & Andrew Hirsh © Andrew Hirsh.

<sup>357</sup> Michel, Chantal Catherine. “Panels for Peace: Contributions of Israeli and Palestinian Comics to Peace-Building”. Milan, Italy: Journal of Fonazione CDEC (2013).

<sup>358</sup> Michel, Chantal Catherine. “The Art of Persuasion and Propaganda”. Milan, Italy: Journal of Fonazione CDEC (2013): p. 3.

**Commented [136]:** Maybe write “creating a representational, balanced **discourse** in the form of an engaging, epic story”

## Philosophy

Our core values are empathy, open-mindedness, and the pursuit of truth. If you want to convince anyone of your perspective, you need to demonstrate you understand and respect theirs or at least the will to try. It isn't difficult to have empathy for our neighbors, but it isn't easy to have empathy for those we perceive as enemies. It is also difficult to admit mistakes or wrongdoing, especially if the other party seems unwilling to do the same. But someone has to be the first and a sincere apology can go a long way. It also isn't easy to be open-minded, it requires the humility to accept that your perspective may be misinformed, and it can create cognitive dissonance to recognize that world views contradictory to your own, may (also) be true. Olive Branch Pictures endeavors to address conflicting group narratives with an open-mindedness derived from Socrates's notion, "the more I know, the more I know I know nothing." We must be willing to question our beliefs as well as understand and tolerate the beliefs of others, recognizing that we might learn from them. Being open-minded is necessary for the pursuit of truth, a noble endeavor that can unite people across ideologies.

Olive Branch Pictures was originally inspired in-part by the Taoist Yin Yang, which describes how opposing, distinct ideas and entities are also complementary and interconnected in nature.<sup>359</sup> Olive Branch Pictures asserts that moral and cultural relativism, as well as moral and cultural objectivism, are not necessarily mutually exclusive, that "contradiction is the

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<sup>359</sup> Lao Tzu, Feng, G., & English, J. "Tao Te Ching". *Vintage Books* (1972).

essence of the human condition”, and that there is beauty in ambiguity.<sup>360, 361</sup> Olive Branch Pictures ponders Rabbi Hillel’s question: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?”<sup>362</sup>

Hindus and Buddhists believe in the Karmic cycle. Muslims say “inshallah” – “if Allah wills”. Jews say “bizrat haShem” – “with G-d’s help”. Olive Branch Pictures respects both religious and secular perspectives while accepting a Perennial perspective on religion, that most religious traditions share a single, metaphysical truth or source from which all esoteric and exoteric knowledge and doctrine grows.<sup>363, 364, 365</sup>

Olive Branch Pictures strives for authenticity. Authenticity, however, does not mean actuality. Authenticity means an internally consistent world, true to itself in scope, depth, and detail. As Aristotle states: “For the purposes of [story] a convincing impossibility is preferable to an unconvincing possibility.”<sup>366</sup>

Olive Branch Pictures pledges to follow responsible ethical standards when engaging minors.

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<sup>360</sup> Dr. Phillip M. Stone (My Grandfather) (1977).

<sup>361</sup> Leonard Bernstein. “The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard” *Harvard University Press* (1976).

<sup>362</sup> Hillel HaZaken, Pirkey Avot, 1:13.

<sup>363</sup> Aldus Huxley. “The Perennial Philosophy”. New York: Harper & Row, 1990, [©1945].

<sup>364</sup> Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1911-1925.

<sup>365</sup> Charles B. Schmitt. “Perennial Philosophy: From Agostino Steuco to Leibniz”. *Journal of the History of Ideas, University of Pennsylvania Press* (1966).: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2708338>

<sup>366</sup> McKee, Robert. “Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting”. New York: *ReganBooks* (1997).

In storytelling, conflict drives the plot forward. As William Ury and Roger Fisher eloquently state: “Conflict is an inevitable and useful part of life. It often leads to change and generates insight. Few injustices are addressed without serious conflict. In the form of business competition, conflict helps create prosperity and it lies at the heart of the democratic process, where the best decisions result not from a superficial consensus but from exploring different points of view and searching for creative solutions.”<sup>367</sup>

It is much harder to hate, persecute, and commit violence against people when their humanity is brought to light and much harder when they are demonized. One of the best ways to humanize “others” is through the humanities – literature, art, music, culture, and language.

Commented [137]: Supporting evidence source?

### People-to-People Approach

In pursuing a people-to-people approach, Olive Branch Pictures recognizes that People-to-people activities cannot occur in a vacuum and must be accompanied by efforts to change injustices at other levels (structural, political, economic). Local community leaders are positioned best to bridge the grassroots and the policy levels.<sup>368</sup> The Collaborative Learning Projects’ “Reflecting on Peace Practice” study found that “programming that focuses on change at the individual level, but that never translates into action at the socio-political level has no

<sup>367</sup> Fisher, R., Ury, W. and Patton, B. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*, 2nd ed., Houghton Mifflin (1991).

<sup>368</sup> Danice Brown Guzman and Lila Khatiwada. “Expanding the Reach of Impact Evaluations in Peacebuilding: A Retrospective Evaluation of CMM P2P Activities in Israel/West Bank”. *Notre Dame Initiative for Global Development* (2019).

discernable effect on peace. The reality of people-to-people peacebuilding processes is very slow and rarely deliver highly visible, attributable outcomes. Such outcomes result from cumulative, repeated multiple efforts by a variety of actors and approaches.<sup>369</sup> The most effective people-to-people approach focus on the balance between grassroots community engagement and individual influencers namely community leaders, policymakers, and organic, representational cultural influencers. Due to the viral social media world, we live in, and the entertainment-media nature of this venture, these cultural influencers such as artists, musicians, and actors, will be key to achieving a broad, representational audience, potentially directly contributing to production, and promoting it to their followings.<sup>370</sup>

### **Methodology**

Olive Branch Pictures strives for subjective balance for lack of objective truth. The core principles guiding Olive Branch Pictures' methodology are ideological balance and representation. The story development process relies on interdisciplinary research spanning anthropology, theology, psychology, linguistics, history, media, politics, art, etc., a common understanding of humanity, and grassroots stakeholder consultation, especially from youth, as well as a representational team of talented artists, writers, musicians, actors, directors, and comedians and ideologically balanced advisory board of diplomats, religious authorities,

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<sup>369</sup> Sebastian Kratzer. "Webinar: Financing Peacebuilding – How to Maximize Impact". *Conciliation Resources, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue* (2021): 23:38.

<sup>370</sup> Yara Hawari. "The Revival of People-to-People Projects: Relinquishing Israeli Accountability". *Al-Shabaka* (2021).

community leaders, media professionals, academics, and artists, etc. The team and advisory board are selected through ideological spectrum compass testing across gender and ideology as well as expertise and reputation. We apply *design thinking*<sup>371</sup> methods to brainstorm and validate ideas for character, dialogue, plot, visuals, etc.

Due to the controversy of such intractable conflict, it is unreasonable to assume that imposing representation and ideologically balance will be easy, particularly including more extreme perspectives. To surmount this challenge Olive Branch Pictures supports a cooperative-competitive model through negotiation, compromise, and dialectic<sup>372</sup> to decide the characters, dialogue, background, and action. In a controlled, ideologically balanced system, opposing perspectives should roughly cancel each other out across ideological spectrums to reveal common ground, championing classical liberalism in the pursuit of truth. In order to bring together talent and organizational partners from diverse backgrounds and political perspectives, Olive Branch Pictures will offer: a seat at the roundtable to ensure the accuracy of their representation within the story, jobs and training, funding for non-profit partners, a percentage of profits and return on investment for for-profit companies, and the opportunity to have a positive impact on the situation, in exchange for development assistance, perspective, promotion, credibility, and network access – united by the common pursuit of truth, peace, and

<sup>371</sup> Design thinking is a non-linear, iterative process that teams use to understand users, challenge assumptions, redefine problems and create innovative solutions over five phases: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test.

<sup>372</sup> The Dialectical Method – A method of philosophical discourse that involves some sort of contradictory process between opposing forces. In Platonic dialectics, the two arguments add zero sum. In Hegelian Dialectics, the two sides are synthesized in a combination (Source: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

**Commented [138]:** To navigate controversy & reach diverse stakeholder communities Olive Branch Pictures will:

- > Use design thinking methods with statistically-sampled, stakeholder-crowdsourced consultation to brainstorm and validate ideas for character, dialogue, plot, and visuals.
- > Produce slightly altered versions of Shira and Amal in different stakeholder dialects i.e., Bedouin, Jerusalemite, Egyptian, etc. to accommodate the culture and perspectives of those communities without sacrificing the core message.
- > Feature multiple, interactive storylines allowing the audience to “choose their own adventure”, giving them agency and revealing the fickle nature of narrative in regard to the conflict.

**Commented [139]:** Could embed miro board to show visuals of what the design thinking methodology would look like

justice. Additionally, if the representatives of these diverse ideologies are confident in their truth, they should have no problem engaging in such discourse, with the confidence that if their ideology is represented accurately within the framework of the narrative, the audience should be able to discern this truth from all the other truths presented. Furthermore, when faced against systemic injustice it can be prudent to change the system from within rather than just working to overthrow the system from outside.

Commented [140]: Find source for social change from within the system rather than outside

It is human nature to be tribal.<sup>373</sup> In the same way that rival nations gather to compete in the Olympic Games (sport as a non-violent means of aggression catharsis), the more polarized members of creative team, advisory board, and organizational partners could compete to create the most emotionally-convincing, evidence-backed narratives within the framework of the overarching story, especially those disinclined to participate in a joint Israeli-Palestinian creative venture in favor of cultural boycott.

The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel defines normalization in the Palestinian as “the participation in any project, initiative or activity, in Palestine or internationally, that aims (implicitly or explicitly) to bring together Palestinians (and/or Arabs) and Israelis (people or institutions) without placing as its goal resistance to and exposure of the Israeli occupation and all forms of discrimination and oppression against the Palestinian people.”<sup>374</sup> This element of competition offers a way to navigate BDS, to bring those

<sup>373</sup> Cory J. Clark, Brittany S. Liu, Bo M. Winegard, and Peter H. Ditto. “Tribalism Is Human Nature”. *Association for Psychological Science* (2019).

<sup>374</sup> “What is Academic and Cultural Normalization”. *Palestinian Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel* (2009).

artists, producers, and organizations to the table to defend their narrative on an even playing field. This competitive-collaborative production mechanism could be set up much like turn-based game with teams arranged based on ideology within the overarching democratic vote-based system.

However, Olive Branch Pictures' productions wouldn't normalize occupation because they are designed representationally, created and funded by and for Israelis and Palestinians, vetted by a distinguished, ideologically advisory board, and aims to present the realities of the Conflict, which includes occupation and resistance as well as mobilize its audience to make mutual steps toward coexistence on the personal, community, commercial, and policy levels such as improving living standards, freedom of movement, technology, water access, and security.<sup>375</sup>

By not participating, they forfeit the opportunity to fight for their perspective (with the pen and not the sword) on an even playing field, for the audience in their best interest to convince the veracity of their narrative, allowing that spot to either go unfilled or to someone who may not quite share their perspective or talent.

The same would apply to Israelis and Jews, by not participating, they would be revealing their unwillingness to make compromises for peace.

<sup>375</sup> Shira Goldberg, Daniel Ben Namer, Yair Smolyanov, Jason Silverman, and Haggai Elkayam Shalem. "Shrinking the Conflict". <https://www.tzimzum.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Shrinking-the-Conflict-About-Us.pdf>

**Commented [141]:** Could add: to build bridges to improve final status negotiations.

**Commented [142]:** Maybe add: There is a perception among BDS activists that building support for international pressure, isolation, and vilification of Israel will lead to their goals of statehood or independence rather than with Israel in direct negotiations.

**Commented [143]:** For more on cultural boycott see: <https://howround.com/it-long-past-time-american-theatres-boycott-israel> and try to craft creative solutions for how to appease such an audience without sacrificing the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their homeland.

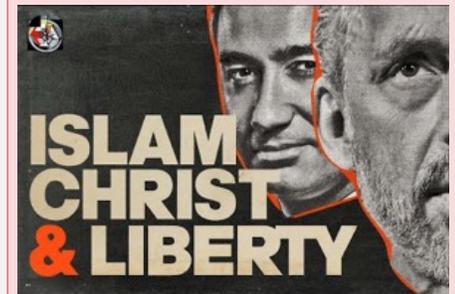
**Commented [AH144]:** Potentially add the element of Messiah in Judaism and Islam, the idea that God governs the world so such compromise couldn't possibly prevent the inevitable coming of Messiah – only delay or accelerate it – and therefore because this has never been done before in addition to many reasons previously or later stated, is worth doing

Additionally the concept of *Murjiah*

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Murjiah>

Could be an Islamic way to justify peace

17:40 [Islam, Christ, and Liberty](#) | [Mustafa Akyol](#) | [The JBP Podcast S4: E56](#)



By presenting both narratives at the same time, the two parties engage in mutually advantageous dialectic compromise in that they allow their narrative to reach the ears of audiences unfamiliar with or in opposition to it, moderated by the presence of the narrative that they already agree with. Like how it is helpful often when giving feedback to an employee to share the negatives with the positives.

Palestinian authorities and BDS activists have traditionally opposed direct negotiations and interactions with Israel out of concern that any legitimization of Israel's existence nullifies the validity of their own narratives and that building 3<sup>rd</sup> party support as well as isolation, vilification, and boycott of Israel will lead to their goals of statehood or independence.<sup>376</sup> However, according to Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon, "Peace can only come through direct negotiations between the two parties. (...) No solution can be imposed [only] from the outside; it must be based on direct negotiations on the final status issues".<sup>377</sup>

In addition to fostering peace, such a production could be used to maintain existing or newly established levels of peace.

## Production

<sup>376</sup> Mark A. Heller: The Arab League's Endorsement of Direct Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations: Arab Activism or Political Theater?. *Scholars for Peace in the Middle East* (2010): <https://spme.org/boycotts-divestments-sanctions-bds/boycotts-divestments-and-sanctions-bds-news/mark-a-heller-the-arab-leagues-endorsement-of-direct-israeli-palestinian-negotiations-arab-activism-or-political-theater/8647/>

<sup>377</sup> Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon. UN Conference 2016.

**Commented [145]:** Maybe add something like: "due to the high saturation of accessible media content, it is vital for Olive Branch Pictures productions to stand about the rest both for quality ad representational balance and engage in dept marketing both bottom-up grassroots and top-down advertisement."  
→ [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229756681\\_Media\\_Saturation\\_and\\_Entertainment-Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229756681_Media_Saturation_and_Entertainment-Education)

**Commented [146]:** Maybe add something like: "such productions present not only significant value in peacebuilding to stimulate existing peace processes but also in post-conflict situations for peace maintenance."

**Commented [AH147]:** Maybe elaborate

There are several ways that the story could be produced. All methods involve a design thinking approach by a representational creative team with statistically sampled stakeholder input and oversight from an ideologically balanced, representational advisory board to ensure authenticity, representation, and balance, borrowing from the contemporary and historical memetics, semiotics, aesthetics, literature, and cultures of the conflict zone and its peoples as well as learning from the successes and failures of relevant productions

One potential method is having a single writer, with considerable understanding of relevant societies, create the story, striving to portray actors with objectivity and balance, with a Jewish (Israeli) illustrator and (Palestinian) Arab illustrator pair. Another option is for Israeli-Palestinian pairs to create the script and the illustrations. It is also possible that the two representatives are each both the writer and the illustrator. A fourth alternative involves a Jewish or Israeli script writer matched with a (Palestinian) Arab illustrator or vice-versa. A fifth option has multiple writers and/or illustrators developing the script and/or illustrations together. Involving multiple writers and illustrators adds more perspective but creates more friction which could make the production longer and more expensive. An additional benefit is the more artists means more follower communities that could be absorbed. Artists could develop a common style or potentially allowing for a quilt of different styles. In all cases, the writer(s) and illustrator(s) could be selected for either "objectivity", and/or balanced ideological (and ideally gender) representation (which arguably would mean a relative majority perspective). A sixth method could involve, as in the case of Liquid Comics' and Open Hand

Initiative's *The Silver Scorpion*, representatives of the target demographics (in the case Israeli and Palestinian Youth) could be gathered and encouraged to imagine story ideas together which would be developed into a full production by the creative team. A seventh option could be an open call disseminated to target communities through local channels to collect story ideas. Lastly, an eighth option has Olive Branch Pictures obtain the rights to and/or collaborate with the owners of existing intellectual property relevant to the conflict, and adapt them into comics and animation, improving their representation and ideological balance, and package curated content under one brand. ||

It is also possible to develop multiple stories through a variety of these methods and produce the ones which demonstrate the highest potential for social, economics, and artistic success. Generally, in the entertainment industry, studios receive dozens, even hundreds of scripts, choose a few dozen to develop and a handful of those actually get produced, knowing that roughly a half of them will fail, another third or so will break even, and a select few become massive successes, making up for the losses. |

Expanding upon the concept of the advisory board, this (judicial) panel would be comprised of 9 or more individuals. An odd number to allow for a tie breaker and the number 9 because it potentially allows for enough diversity of experience to allow for adequate representation and expertise while being small enough to allow for quick enough decision making to actualize the production though possibly more diversity and expertise will be needed to accommodate audience/market demand. These advisors would include:

**Commented [148]:** As a studio with licenses for various pre-existing IP as well as original IP coalescing on representational, ideologically balanced counter-propaganda for peace, Olive Branch Pictures could charge a subscription fee (either b2c or b2b i.e. Netflix) and thus create a steady stream of income as long as it continues to produce and repackage/recycle new content. This can be attractive for the owners of the existing content because through marketing and rebranding it would give new life to their sales through which they would of course receive royalties. "Sustainability was cited by Mehrj, Anwar and Shahin as a challenge to their comic art. The three artists say they are stretched thin, having to multitask as producers, distributors and promoters of their comic books while working full-time jobs. "We need to make this industry sustainable," Anwar explained. "We can't continue to rely on grants, we need to find someone to handle the business aspect, and we need to make this a stable industry." Mehrj, agreed - telling the panel that the number of copies printed of her comic had more than halved since it first went to press. "The [comic] market in Lebanon is very small," Lena said. "The first issue we printed, we made 2,500 copies, now we're down to 1000, not more. But if some entrepreneur could take over the distribution, we could reach the Middle East. We are all artists; we can't be everything. Right now it's an NGO, we don't make money out of it; we need someone who can make it into a business, and I think that's the case for all Arab artists around the world." For Shahin, the solution to a contracting industry was to take on all the different publishing roles - but this has come with its own issues. "I decided to publish independently, so I also do marketing, PR, and distribution, and I don't think I do it very well, so the lack of a business aspect to this industry affects me as well," Shahin said. "I think comic art is an industry worth investing in, but [there is] no guarantee of a return on profits any time soon. If someone were to invest, they'd have to be a bit charitable and patient at first." <https://www.middleeasteye.net/features/arab-comic-artists-discuss-adversity-and-censorship>

**Commented [149]:** Maybe add "in a subscription model"

**Commented [150]:** Consider changing the language to make it broader and therefore applicable to other conflicts and not just the Israeli-Palestinian conflict i.e. changing "Israeli and Palestinian illustrator" to "representative illustrators"

**Commented [151]:** Or "editorial"

- Religious leaders representing at least the majority views of the stakeholder doctrines i.e., the Abrahamic faiths if not other dharmas such as Buddhist, Hindu, etc. as well.
- Community leaders nominated by popular survey, expert opinion, and internal review.
- Political representatives i.e., elected officials, negotiators, diplomats, etc.
- Distinguished academics from various disciplines including psychology, religion, political science, anthropology, art history, etc.
- Artists, namely those experiences in illustration and animation as well as prominent stakeholder art/cultural leaders.
- Media experts including news media, entertainment media, and media technology.

These advisors would serve to arbitrate controversies within the production process such as character, plot, dialogue, etc. as well as recruitment and distribution. Votes will be decided by majority, plurality, consensus on a case-by-case basis or agreed upon permanently by consensus by the advisory board itself. In the case of no agreement, both or all options should be implemented if possible. It would be the job of the creative production team i.e., writers, artists, and directors to come up with creative solutions to present to the advisory board for approval. For example, if deciding who makes the first tangible act of aggression in the story, the Jew or the Arab, the advisory board may not reach a conclusive vote until the creative team presents a fictional, yet realistic scenario in which it is ambiguous who committed the first tangible act of aggression.

**Commented [152]:** When discussing religious authority approval, that as long as such productions avoid going against such religious perspective by following negative commandments, potentially dancing round issues subliminally, rather than positive commandments, and thus incorporate the collective, generational wisdom of these religions without being overly restrictive in prescribing behavior through storytelling.

Expanding upon the concept of stakeholder crowdsourced input, Olive Branch Pictures aims to conduct statistically representational surveys of stakeholders to provide feedback and suggestions on the stories we develop to meet the narrative needs of the intended audience as well as foster a connection between the story and the stakeholder audience knowing that they had a direct impact on the production. Olive Branch Pictures would apply standard counter-biasing methods to survey these stakeholders in concert with experts and established institutions. It may be necessary to offer payment to some of the surveyees for their time to achieve appropriate sample sizes in the same way that test subjects are paid to participate in scientific research experiments.

It may be necessary to have an executive with final say or veto power in order to actualize the production. If so, recognizing the virtual impossibility of an unbiased perspective, especially regarding controversial conflicts, this executive should be selected based on demonstrated lack of bias or commitment to the pursuit of objectivity as well as specialized, general expertise of the interdisciplinary fields relevant to the entire project.

The ultimate goals behind the structure of Olive Branch Pictures are to promote the highest quality production and greatest positive impact within budget constraints, producing stories capable of reaching diverse stakeholder communities (particularly the next generation), building mutual trust and understanding, and breaking the cycles of propaganda, xenophobia, hatred, and violence.

**Commented [153]:** Maybe add:  
When collecting survey data door-to-door (and virtually), e should follow Khalil Shikaki's approach of bring both a man and woman who can enter the house to speak with the wife or daughters if the father isn't home in traditional Palestinian society

**Commented [154]:** Define target stakeholder audience (and target commercial market)

## Target Audience

Olive Branch Pictures' target audience for its Israeli-Palestinian production is divided into two overlapping sectors: the commercial audience and the social impact audience.

The target age is 11-14 specifically but more generally intended for "the whole family". The commercial audience is based on that of similar products including graphic novels such as *Persepolis*, *Maus*, and Joe Sacco's "*Palestine*", animated feature films such as *The Prince of Egypt*, Disney's *Frozen*, Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*, and *Bilal*, and edutainment apps and video games such as *Jeel*, *FunBrain*, and *National Geographic Challenge!*.<sup>378,379</sup>

The social impact audience is derived from the hierarchy of proximity to the conflict both social and physical, with the biggest perpetrators and victims of the conflict and as well as the most extreme leaning groups at the top, firstly, local Israelis and Palestinians, followed by Jews and Palestinians in the diaspora, then the neighboring populations, then the Middle East and North Africa, then the larger Muslim world, then the Christian world, and then international.

Prototype

Commented [155]: Maybe list Total Addressable Market, Total Serviceable Market, and Serviceable Attainable Market here

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<sup>378</sup> <https://nerdbear.com/educational-games/>

<sup>379</sup> <https://jeelapp.com/EN/>

Olive Branch Pictures' first production will tackle the Palestine-Israel Issue. OBP's prototype "Shira and Amal", tells the story of two young women, one Israeli, one Palestinian, who use art and music to cope with trauma and bring peace to Jerusalem.

"Shira and Amal" is memetically, semiotically, and linguistically engineered to employ the freedom of fiction, language, imagery to navigate the social, political, and religious factors of the conflict without sacrificing entertainment value.



Shira and Amal Cover © Andrew Hirsh 2020.

The story of *Shira and Amal* is flexible, subject to the input of ideologically diverse, representational experts and members of the target social impact audience, as well as ongoing changes in the region. The story could very well change entirely depending on the creative process, feedback, discourse, and production constraints. *Shira and Amal* strives to balance the Israeli and Palestinian narratives with dual protagonists through fiction based on reality, history, experience and universal story principles, avoiding overt didacticism – allowing the audience to interpret meaning for themselves. The characters, "Shira" and "Amal", are designed to be role-models, teaching the next generation how to cope with trauma, learn from mistakes, and the value of education, discipline, and creativity. They are strong, independent women who offer the potential to inspire women across the Middle

Commented [156]: Could add the word "current" when giving the presentation to imply more openness toward the possibility of producing other stories

Commented [157]: Maybe save all references to Shira and Amal for a different paper that explains the plot, characters, dialogue, music, and visuals behind Shira and Amal  
→ Would make this essay shorter and more readable  
→ Would also make it more timeless in case Shira and Amal get changed (dramatically)

East. Their journey across both secular and religious worlds enables access to both religious and secular audiences. The cast of characters are designed as cultural and/or ideological representatives and expose the audience to diverse perspectives.

### Media Bias and Propaganda

In this region multiple media outlets and educational platforms consistently perpetuate biased views on controversial issues. There is generally a lack of open-mindedness and lots of accusation with little confession or counterargument. By distributing equally between stakeholders, Olive Branch Pictures' productions will counteract propaganda and outperform biased media outlets with a meaningful, balanced, entertaining narrative. There are those who would call the work of Olive Branch Pictures propaganda itself, especially when they come across ideas in its productions that present alternative perspectives to their narrative, but if indeed Olive Branch Pictures can achieve ideologically balanced representation, then it would stand to counteract propaganda. In an increasingly "post-truth" world in which facts are subjective and discourse is dominated by feelings, an ideologically balanced, representational board of relevant experts is necessary to presenting an accurate, authentic depiction of reality and gaining the trust of any audience.

**Commented [158]:** Consider swapping some "by...will" statements with "if...then" statements regarding supporting theories of change as promoted by

**Commented [159]:** Maybe discuss the idea of a "post-truth" era

### Game Theory

Game Theory simulates statistical models in a wide variety of fields from economics and international relations to biology and psychology.<sup>380</sup> The “Hawk-Dove” game can be applied to model the impact potential of Olive Branch Pictures for the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict.<sup>381</sup> Players “A” and “B” choose to fight (Hawk) with the chance to gain resource “ $r$ ” (in this case land) or concede (Dove). The “Nash Equilibrium” occurs when both parties’ available options leave them better off no matter what their opponent decides.<sup>382</sup> However, humans are inherently emotional, amoral and egoistic.<sup>383</sup> Influences such as religion can affect rational decision-making. To err is human, to forgive divine”.<sup>384</sup> International involvement helps prevent zero-sum outcomes by incentivizing all outcomes to activate a negotiation mechanism, “ $n$ ”. Negotiations are based on the players’ relative power (physical, economic, demographic, legal, diplomatic, media, cultural, moral, etc.), “ $n_A$ ” : “ $n_B$ ”, plus foreign influence and the players’ ability to forgive, agree to disagree, and find mutual gains, and creative problem-solve, regardless of the “solution”, whether two-state, one-state “Palestine”, one-state “Israel”, confederation, improved status-quo, no-state, multi-lateral resettlement (as opposed to forced exile or genocide), etc.. Variable Olive Branch Pictures “ $\omega$ ”, which represents all top-down and bottom-up diplomacy efforts, increases the probability of successful negotiations by improving mutual understanding, communications, and goodwill, increasing the value of both  $n_B$  and  $n_A$  and

<sup>380</sup> Myerson, Roger. “Game Theory: Analysis of Conflict”. *Harvard University Press*; p. 1 (1991).

<sup>381</sup> Eryk Dobrushkin. “A Game Theoretic Approach to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” *Harvard College* (2019).

<sup>382</sup> Hank Green. “Game Theory: The Science of Decision Making”. *CrashCourse* (2016).

<sup>383</sup> Al-Rodham, Nayef. “Who are we: Neurochemical Man and Emotional Amoral Egoism.” *The Montreal Review* (2015).

<sup>384</sup> Alexander Pope. “An Essay on Criticism” (1711).

moderating the range between  $n_B$  and  $n_A$ . If one player chooses "Hawk" and the other chooses "Dove", the Hawk claims " $r$ ". If players both choose Hawk, they incur a cost relative to their power, " $c_A: c_B$ ", until the nash equilibrium is reached, aliens invade, or the messiah comes. If both players choose Dove neither player incurs cost " $c$ ". Players receive +/- " $n$ " plus mutual cultural diplomacy gains " $\omega$ ".

		Hawk	Dove
		Player A Hawk	$r - n_A + \omega - c_A, n_B - c_B + \omega$
Player A Dove	$n_A + \omega, r - n_B + \omega$	$n_A + \omega, n_B + \omega$	
		Player B	

Olive Branch Pictures Game Theory Model given Player A superiority

Commented [160]: Is + or x, etc. if it increases the probability of successful negotiations thus increasing the value of both  $n_B$  and  $n_A$  and moderates the range?

||

### Trust

According to a 2019 study from the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation assessing the support for alternative solutions to the Israel-Palestine conflict by average Israelis and Palestinians, "mistrust, broadly defined, is likely the greatest impediment to peace."<sup>385</sup> A significant reason for the failure of the Oslo Accords and other peace negotiation attempts was a lack of trust. The terms of agreement were not implemented proportionately and simultaneously by both sides. The arrangement was Palestinian de-escalation of terrorism in

Commented [AH161]: Take out?

Commented [162]: Maybe add explanation of infinite vs. finite game and how it applies to this model. The goal is to influence the players away from a zero-sum, finite game, in which...

<sup>385</sup> Daniel Egel, C. Ross Anthony, Shira Efron, Rita T. Karam, Mary E. Vaiana, Charles P. Ries. Alternatives in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict". *RAND Corporation* (2021).

exchange for Israeli de-escalation of settlement construction. Increasing trust and communication improves the likelihood of fair negotiations. Full representation and ideological balance would allow the production to gain the trust of and thereby engage diverse stakeholder audiences.

### Transparency

Olive Branch Pictures is committed to full transparency. We will disclose all financial records and document the entire production process to produce into a “the making of” documentary. In addition to increasing transparency, this documentation including periodical video and blog updates, as well as access to unedited footage, will support promotion and impact.

### Power

It is important to address power dynamics within the conflict Olive Branch Pictures undertakes. While history has been traditionally written by the victors, we know on a moral level that “might does not make right”. At the same time, meek does not make right either. It can be easy to fall into the perspective of oppressor and oppressed; but it isn’t always so black and white. The balance of power should be accurately depicted through the storytelling as well as how that situation came to be. The production should avoid imposing moral judgements upon the situation when possible, allowing the audience to grapple with the moral challenges presented themselves.

**Commented [163]:** Maybe do a little digging into the impact of documentary films and cite *Assessing the Social Impact of Issues-Focused Documentaries: Research Methods & Future Considerations* October 2014  
by:  
Caty Borum Chattoo,  
Creative Director, Center for Media & Social Impact,  
American University  
Angelica Das,  
Associate Director, Center for Media & Social Impact,  
American University  
  
<https://cmsimpact.org/resource/assessing-the-social-impact-of-issues-focused-documentaries-research-methods-future-considerations/>

## Dignity

Dignity is critical to solving conflicts.<sup>386</sup> Look at the history of World Wars I and II. Hitler used the humiliation of the German people in WWI after the Treaty of Versailles to justify their need to dominate, leading to WWII and the scapegoating of the Jewish people. Preserving the dignity of both parties, particularly the weaker one; prevents smoldering humiliation from igniting into violence. Additionally, it is very difficult to change someone's mind without listening to and respecting their perspective, even if you consider it extreme. By emphasizing dignity, Olive Branch Pictures will help sow the seeds of forgiveness and pluck the weeds of resentment.

Commented [164]: maybe add another reference

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## Tradition Formation

*OBP Productions* could be watched annually as a family or community to form a tradition. This annual tradition could coincide with a holiday for peace and reconciliation. It is in this same way that Jews, Muslims, Christians, and countless other faiths preserve their cultural and religious identity by annually re-reading their stories. Olive Branch Pictures could work with NGO and Non-Profit partners as well as local theaters and communities to promote annual screenings. While it is necessary to forgive to resolve conflict that does not mean it is necessary to forget.

Commented [166]: mention "museum theory of conflict mediation"?  
i.e.: <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/tags/museum-diplomacy>

Commented [167]: Could add that according to a majority of historians, the Torah and other holy texts were not written directly from the word of God but rather adapted over generations, borrowing from various local and regional myths. If this is indeed true, again taking an agnostic stance, then Olive Branch Pictures might hope to emulate the historic approach of collective myth making, bringing together conflicting communities and borrowing from past mythological traditions as well as scientific theories to construct a myth capable of uniting these communities.

<sup>386</sup> Donna Hicks and Desmond Tutu. "Dignity: The Essential Role It Plays in Resolving Conflict". *Yale University Press*, New Haven; London (2011): p. 1-24.

## Mythmaking

The dominant view of archeologists and historians postulate that the Torah and other holy texts contain historical inaccuracies and were adapted over generations rather than transmitted at once and borrow from various regional myths.<sup>387</sup> Many Muslim and Jewish scholars agree that every passage of their sacred texts should be interpreted literally until proven otherwise and should then be understood as metaphor.<sup>388, 389, 390</sup> If this is indeed true then Olive Branch Pictures might hope to emulate the historic approach of collective mythmaking, bringing together conflicting communities and building from past mythological, cultural traditions as well as scientific, data-intensive approaches, to construct a myth capable of uniting these communities. Without mutual exclusion, Olive Branch Pictures hopes to tap into both the collective unconscious and the contemporary zeitgeist to produce true works of art, drawing inspiration from the sacred, the divine.

## Distribution

<sup>387</sup> Matt Baker. "Who Wrote the Bible? Episode 1: The Torah Pentateuch". *UsefulCharts: Youtube* (2021).

<sup>388</sup> Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon. "The Guide to the Perplexed". London

George Routledge & Sons LTD. New York: E. P. Dutton & CO 1910 Second Edition, 1904. Chapter 30, Section 2. Source: Rabbi Meyer Trievitz.

<sup>389</sup> Shiekh Hamza Yusuf. "Literal Meanings vs Metaphors in Islam." *Islam Rewards* via *YouTube* (2017) (Accessed 11 July 2021): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmR2F3ZFz\\_M&ab\\_channel=IslamRewards](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmR2F3ZFz_M&ab_channel=IslamRewards)

<sup>390</sup> Rabbi Jeremy Weider. "Non-Literal Interpretation of Scripture in the Jewish Tradition". *Yeshiva University* (2006): [https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/716561/rabbi-jeremy-wieder/non-literal-interpretation-of-scripture-in-jewish-tradition/?fbclid=IwAR1Cs-E2WF8-izOcusdDvRt\\_yb2Qylwz6-mwDfKwMkpLg2nzJunXy8wrc\\_s](https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/716561/rabbi-jeremy-wieder/non-literal-interpretation-of-scripture-in-jewish-tradition/?fbclid=IwAR1Cs-E2WF8-izOcusdDvRt_yb2Qylwz6-mwDfKwMkpLg2nzJunXy8wrc_s) (accessed 11 July 2021).

**Commented [168]:** Many Islamic and Jewish scholars agree that every bit of their sacred texts should be interpreted literally until proven otherwise and should then be understood as metaphor.  
[https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/716561/rabbi-jeremy-wieder/non-literal-interpretation-of-scripture-in-jewish-tradition/?fbclid=IwAR1Cs-E2WF8-izOcusdDvRt\\_yb2Qylwz6-mwDfKwMkpLg2nzJunXy8wrc\\_s](https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/716561/rabbi-jeremy-wieder/non-literal-interpretation-of-scripture-in-jewish-tradition/?fbclid=IwAR1Cs-E2WF8-izOcusdDvRt_yb2Qylwz6-mwDfKwMkpLg2nzJunXy8wrc_s)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmR2F3ZFz\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmR2F3ZFz_M)  
Literal Meanings vs Metaphors in Islam - Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Islam Rewards

**Commented [169]:** Investigate where Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas make this argument that reason and faith should not contradict each other, and if there another prominent Muslim scholar that makes this case? Ibn Sina?

**Commented [170]:** Expanding upon the long-term vision, take the plight of the Uyghurs in China as a hypothetical case study for how Olive Branch Pictures' model could productively mediate conflict and suffering. Assuming that the Chinese government is too powerful, their information infrastructure too tightly regulated and international spheres of influence too strong, to allow for unilateral international intervention economical, legal, military, or otherwise, in order to protect their international reputation, China might agree to co-sponsor an animated feature film about the Uyghur people with a production team made up of members selected by China, the Uyghur community (abroad to prevent Chinese bias), and international private and public enterprise, to improve Chinese Public Relations while also making tangible improvements in the lives of the Uyghurs.

**Commented [171]:** Could add: the methodology behind Olive Branch Pictures can also be applied as a Post-Conflict solidifier or momentum-builder, helping to bury the hatchet socially and culturally, to be released right after a significant policy breakthrough or treaty

While working with major and local studios and distributors, Olive Branch Pictures emphasizes grassroots distribution through ideologically diverse Non-Profit partners, word of mouth, and tours across schools, libraries, community centers, conferences, festivals to reach stakeholders. Olive Branch Pictures aims to distribute *OBP* productions proportionately and simultaneously across conflicting communities.

### Edutainment<sup>391, 392</sup>

Among the most effective approaches to intractable conflict mediation is the education of the next generation, and one of the best ways to reach the next generation is visual storytelling, specifically comics and epic, musical animation. The education of the next generation is crucial to the maintenance or change of the socio-cultural status quo.<sup>393, 394, 395, 396</sup> Education is also key to mitigating the cycle of hatred, violence, and xenophobia in the long run, because today's youth are tomorrow's citizens.

<sup>391</sup> "What Is Edutainment? Tips for Mixing Education and Entertainment in the Classroom". *American University* <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/what-is-edutainment>

<sup>392</sup> Mirela Katroschi . "Education through Entertainment". *LinkedIn* (2017): <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/education-through-entertainment-mirela-katroschi/>

<sup>393</sup> Askerov, A. (2010). Peace education and conflict resolution: A critical review, *Innovative Issues and Approaches in Social Sciences*, 3(1).

<sup>394</sup> Nurit Basman-Mor. "Saving Peace Education: The Case of Israel". *Canadian Center of Science and Education* (20 November 2020): <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v11n1p18>

<sup>395</sup> Anna Azaryeva Valente and Regev Ben Jacob. "UNICEF and Sustaining Peace *Strengthening the Socio-Economic Foundations of Peace through Education, Young People's Engagement & WASH*". *UNICEF* (February 2020): [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/june\\_3-unicef\\_thematic\\_paper\\_for\\_2020\\_sg\\_report\\_mf.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/june_3-unicef_thematic_paper_for_2020_sg_report_mf.pdf)

<sup>396</sup> Klaus Seitz. "Education and Conflict: The role of education in the creation, prevention and resolution of societal crises – Consequences for development cooperation." *German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development* (December 2004): p. 81.

Commented [172]: Consider breaking this down in B2B, B2C, B2G approach

Commented [173]: Maybe here is where I should refer to the narrative distribution compromise in which Israelis/Jews are compromising by allowing for the relative truth of other narratives in exchange for distribution in countries in which, for the most part, those same other narratives (namely that of the Palestinian people) has been the only one broadcast.

Commented [174]: In the context of identity-based and ethno-political conflicts, measures have proven effective in which the members of hostile groups and prejudiced groups go beyond mere encounter and work together on joint projects in which the mutual benefit of cooperation is clear to see. The cooperation between those of different opinions towards a joint third objective (Davies' "collaborative diversity") has certainly proved to be extremely conflict-prone. Yet it is learning to be able to "endure" and acknowledge differences in situations of heterogeneity that marks out what is perhaps the most significant "school of peaceability".  
– Klaus Seitz. "Education and Conflict  
The role of education in the creation, prevention and resolution of societal crises – Consequences for development cooperation." *German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development* (December 2004): p. 81.

20th century sociologist Emile Durkheim rejected the idea that education could be the force to transform society and resolve social ills. Instead, Durkheim concluded that education “can be reformed only if society itself is reformed.” He argued that education is only the reflection of society and does not create it. However, this perspective doesn’t fully account for the constant variable of different pedagogies competing in the private and public education systems, especially in societies governed by majority rule, as well third-party influence. Durkheim is correct however in asserting that education cannot DIRECTLY impact society, such as policy or budget, but rather INDIRECTLY, such as media and track II diplomacy. This indirect impact is an advantage to Olive Branch Pictures model in fostering the willing of the conflicting parties to compromise, understanding that such compromise can only have indirect consequences.<sup>397</sup> Israeli and Palestinian education is rife with controversy. Both Israeli and

Commented [175]: Maybe add: in regard to potential negative externalities which we would of course take every precaution to mitigate, focusing on common goals.

<sup>397</sup> Pezone, M. & Singer, A. (2003). Education for Social Change: From Theory to Practice. Workplace, 10, 145-151.

Palestinian public social studies curriculums erase, ignore, or antagonize the (national) identity of the other.<sup>398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408</sup>

Legal scholars Ellen and Daniel Yamshon assert the efficacy of cartoons for peacebuilding and reconciliation: "The use of comics, graphics, and images can constitute powerful tools to sensitize, educate, and motivate people to participate in and prepare for dispute resolution."<sup>409</sup> As Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said writes, "comic books seem to exist in all languages and cultures, from East to West. In subject matter they go the whole range from inspired and fantastic to sentimental and silly; all of them, however, are easy to

<sup>398</sup> Yoram Ettinger. "Palestinian Hate Education Dooms Peace Prospects". *JNS.org* (April 3, 2022): <https://www.algemeiner.com/2022/04/03/palestinian-hate-education-dooms-peace-prospects/>.

<sup>399</sup> Itam Shalev. "Review of UNRWA-Produced Study Materials in the Palestinian Territories." *Impact-SE* (2021): <https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/UNRWA-Produced-Study-Materials-in-the-Palestinian-Territories%E2%80%94Jan-2021.pdf> (Accessed 29 July 2021).

<sup>400</sup> Nathan J. Brown. "Going back to school on Palestinian textbooks". *Middle East Institute* (2021): <https://www.mei.edu/publications/going-back-school-palestinian-textbooks> (Accessed 29 July 2021)

<sup>401</sup> "The 2020–21 Palestinian School Curriculum Grades 1–12 Selected Examples (Updated)". *Impact-SE* (May 2021): [https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/PA-Reports\\_-\\_Updated-Selected-Examples\\_May-2021.pdf](https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/PA-Reports_-_Updated-Selected-Examples_May-2021.pdf)

<sup>402</sup> Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. Report on Palestinian Textbooks. 2021.

<sup>403</sup> Or Kashti. "In Israeli Textbooks, the Palestinians Are All but Invisible". *Haaretz* (2020).

<sup>404</sup> Michael Rubin. "Time for talking on hateful Palestinian textbooks is over". *The Times of Israel* (2021): <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/time-for-talking-on-hateful-palestinian-textbooks-is-over/>

<sup>405</sup> Yael Teff-Seker (2020): Peace and conflict in Israeli state-approved textbooks: 2000-2018, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/00220272.2020.1716392: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2020.1716392>

<sup>406</sup> "Al-Fateh: The Hamas Web Magazine for Children: Indoctrination to Jihad, Annihilation and Self-Destruction". *Impact-SE* (2009): [https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Al-Fateh\\_Report\\_2009\\_final.pdf](https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Al-Fateh_Report_2009_final.pdf)

<sup>407</sup> [https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/palestinian-school-magazine-calls-for-armed-struggle-against-israeli-monster-685232?utm\\_source=jpost.app.apple&utm\\_medium=share](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/palestinian-school-magazine-calls-for-armed-struggle-against-israeli-monster-685232?utm_source=jpost.app.apple&utm_medium=share)

<sup>408</sup> BEN ZION GAD. "PA hasn't removed hateful content from textbooks, producing worse content" *JPost* (2022): [https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-694847?utm\\_source=jpost.app.apple&utm\\_medium=share](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-694847?utm_source=jpost.app.apple&utm_medium=share)

<sup>409</sup> Yamson, Ellen; Yamshon, Daniel. "Comics Media in Conflict Resolution Programs". *Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Negotiation Law Review* (2006): p. 1.

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read, to pass around, store, and throw away". The universal language of cartoons can reach across literacy levels.

Cartoons can support cognitive, behavioral, and moral development as well language acquisition.<sup>410</sup> Kids love cartoons! Cartoons are particularly appealing to children due to their generally soft, imaginative, zany, dynamic nature. Animation has evolved as a respected adult art form and retain nostalgic appeal as well. Also, animation often appear less threatening than live-action because we more quickly comprehend that what we are seeing isn't real.<sup>411</sup> Furthermore, animation offers more creative freedom to express ideas than live actions.<sup>412</sup> The influence of cartoons can also be negative, whether intentional or not, e.g., promoting violent or explicit content or behavior to children.<sup>413</sup>

Olive Branch Pictures plans to work with local and regional schools and education organizations to incorporate OBP productions into curriculums. Additionally, to facilitate dialogue, build our grassroots community, and give our audience the opportunity to process the OBP productions within their own communities, Olive Branch Pictures will organize both inter-and-intra-community discussion groups and Q&As, virtually and in-person. Especially in a world increasingly defined by fleeting attention spans, there is a clear need for ideologically balanced edutainment content for Israeli and Palestinian youth.

<sup>410</sup> Derzyan, Tatev, "The Influence of Cartoons on Children's Socialization". *Enlight Studies* (2019): <https://enlightngo.org/language/en/post/7795> (Accessed 30 July 2021).

<sup>411</sup> Dylan Gibson. "Why Animation is Important". *StoneSoup* (2019).

<sup>412</sup> WELLS, P. 1998. *Understanding Animation*. New York: Routledge: p. 2.

<sup>413</sup> Habib, K. and Soliman, T. "Cartoons' Effect in Changing Children Mental Response and Behavior". *Open Journal of Social Sciences* (2015): 3, 248-264.

**Commented [176]:** Maybe add: Ideologically, the images used in cartoons are "means through which ideologies are produced and onto which ideologies are projected" (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 21). As such, cartoons play an important role in manifesting political views and stances and reinforcing ideologies and power relationships (Lewis 2008; Kuipers 2008). From: Kawakib Al-Momani, Muhammad A. Badarneh and Fathi Migdadi  
A semiotic analysis of political cartoons in Jordan in light of the Arab Spring  
De Gruyter | Published online: November 18, 2016  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2016-0033>

**Commented [177]:** Maybe add the use/utility of cartoons in "edutainment"

## Navigating Controversy and Reaching Social Impact Audiences

In order to reach certain stakeholder audiences, the production may need to cooperate with governments and religious authorities that control the media channels. If necessary, through diplomatic and clerical negotiation, Olive Branch Pictures can create slightly altered versions of its content, in regard to word choice and imagery, for different stakeholder audiences. Such alterations include augmenting the modesty of the characters' costumes or language used to refer to political or religious ideas.<sup>414</sup>

If however, despite honest intentions, civil negotiations, and creative problem-solving, such compromises would be so great as to violate the mission and values of Olive Branch Pictures, the production could subvert authorities, understanding that banned media often generates publicity which attracts viewership in a phenomenon known as the "Streisand effect", through grassroots networks and backdoor channels.<sup>415</sup> Additionally, *OBP productions* could feature multiple, interactive storylines, granting the audience the agency to "choose your own adventure" while also demonstrating the variability of narrative.

The identities of creators, publishers, and all other collaborators could be kept anonymous to protect them from malicious authoritarian regimes. In addition to potential collaboration with authorities, alternative versions, and subversion, the fourth way around

<sup>414</sup> Zachary Keyser. "Iran's Khamenei decrees that female cartoon characters must wear hijab". *JPOST* (2021).

<sup>415</sup> Jansen, S. and Martin, B. "The Streisand effect and censorship backfire". *International Journal of Communication* (2015).

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**Commented [AH178]:** Maybe cite: In January 2022, the board of trustees of [McMinn County Schools](#) in east Tennessee, in a 10-0 decision, banned and removed from its curriculum for 8th grade English classes [Maus](#), the [graphic novel](#) about the [Holocaust](#) that is the only graphic novel ever to win a [Pulitzer Prize](#). The board cited as its reasons "rough language" and "unnecessary" profanity (eight words, including "damn"), a small drawing of a nude woman drawn as a mouse, and mentions of violence.<sup>[70][71][72]</sup> Author [Art Spiegelman](#) described the decision as baffling, "[Orwellian](#)", and "daffily myopic", continuing "I can't believe the word 'damn' would get the book jettisoned out of the school on its own." He also suggested that the board members were asking, "Why can't they teach a nicer Holocaust?"<sup>[73][70][74]</sup> The board's decision was covered by media in the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Israel.<sup>[75][76][77][78]</sup> Following the ban, the book became an [Amazon best-seller](#).<sup>[79]</sup> On January 28, 2022, it topped the categories of fiction satire, and comics and graphic novels, and *Maus 1* was No. 5 overall for books.<sup>[79]</sup> It was not in the top 1,000 a week prior.<sup>[80]</sup>

**Commented [179]:** Maybe add: As further leverage, Olive Branch Pictures could even employ "ethical hackers" to bypass authoritarian media control. If the situation were to demand such action,

censorship and reaching social impact audiences is to make content so mainstream, so viral, of such high quality, and kosher-halal enough, that it is irresistible.

### **Funding**

Olive Branch Pictures will secure funding from ideologically diverse sources, from both investors, including individuals, studios, and publishers, and donors, including individuals, NGOs, IGOS, and foundations. Having ideologically diverse funding sources will mitigate bias and generate more consumer trust as well as reach a larger, more diverse audience. Sharing equity in the company between investors, founders, and the team with diverse, even contradictory perspectives, around common goals and values will further promote an equitable society.

### **Hybrid-Profit Model**

Olive Branch Pictures operates a hybrid-profit model, committed to donating 10-20% of revenue to a coalition of ideologically diverse non-profit organizations facilitating regional peacebuilding and sustainable development. To involve our audience in the peacebuilding process, customers will decide which of our diverse non-profit partners they want to receive the donation. Additionally, stakeholder language versions of *OBP* productions will be distributed for free, for a subsidized price accounting for the relative GDPs of the language or

dialect regions, or for a suggested donation while mainstream language versions generate revenue. |

### The Role of Music

Music organizes, catalyzes, and unifies collective identities.<sup>416</sup> Music can solidify in-groupness, foster division, or inter-cultural reconciliation.<sup>417</sup> |

The music for OBP production addressing the Israeli-Arab Conflict will be developed by representational musicians, ethnomusicologists, and linguists featuring a score of both classic and modern songs capturing both cultures, past and present and appeal to a multi-generational audience. Furthermore, by featuring liturgical songs from the represented faiths, the production will be able to reach religious audiences. |

### The Role of Comedy

In his book, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud identified three primary functions of jokes for society: “first, they provide a nonthreatening way to raise culturally taboo subjects; second, they serve as an adaptive strategy to adverse conditions; and third, they provide a benign outlet for repressed aggression and hostility.”<sup>418</sup>

<sup>416</sup> Kay Kaufman Shelemay. “Music Communities: Rethinking the Collective in Music”. *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (2011): p. 1.

<sup>417</sup> Umut Albayrak. “Cultural Reconciliation and Music: Musical Dialogues Direction to Reconciliation between Turkish and Greek Communities in Cyprus”. *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* (2017): p. 321-323.

<sup>418</sup> Downe, P. J. 1999. Laughing when it hurts: Humor and violence in the lives of Costa Rican prostitutes. *Women's Studies International Forum* 22(1). 63–78.

**Commented [180]:** Maybe section on problems  
→ Two are problems are that:  
There is massive competition for media content including contemporary, digital media, classic, and traditional  
Solution Make high quality content distributed both by mainstream and grassroots distributors  
Traditional media e.g. Quran, and Classic Media i.e. National Anthems are more engrained in public consciousness  
Solutions: tradition formulation, inter-and intra community exegesis, and incorporation of traditional values with approval from traditional authorities

**Commented [181]:** Maybe explore the neuroscience behind how sounds get stuck in our heads and how if you hear someone sing or play music than it will get stuck in their head and they might whistle it aloud and transfer to someone else and how it relates to memetics/mimesis

**Commented [182]:** Could talk about the many overlaps between Jewish and Arab Music and the Arab and Middle Eastern influences of Israeli music

Additionally, just as comedy can shape group identity, it can also be a tool to and build bridges between conflicting groups.<sup>419</sup> Comedy can foster positive change by disarmingly ridiculing flaws in society through satire, parody, self-deprecation, wit, etc., creating content that is highly sharable thus amplifying impact.<sup>420</sup> However, comedy can be very hit or miss, and didacticism is often a joke killer.

Comedy contains both universal and culturally specific elements. By collaborating with comedic cultural representatives, veteran and rising comedy stars of the region who know the humor of the people, Olive Branch Pictures will engage its target social demographic audiences.

“Lost in translation” humor is universal – the funny mistakes we all make when learning a new language, mixing up words to say ridiculous things, accidentally insulting people we wish to thank, and words that mean something in one language that mean something completely different in another.<sup>421</sup>

## Language

Miscommunication is a common cause of conflict. If peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians is to be possible, it is important that they be able to understand each other.

<sup>419</sup> Craig Zelizer, “Laughing our Way to Peace or War: Humour and Peacebuilding”. *Journal of Conflictology* (2010).

<sup>420</sup> Borum Chattoo, C. (2019). A funny matter: Toward a framework for understanding the function of comedy in social change. *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*, 32(3), 499-523. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2018-0004>

<sup>421</sup> Guy Sharett. “Streetwise Hebrew: 300<sup>th</sup> Episode Special!!! Bloopers from around the World”. *Apple Podcasts* (2020): <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/streetwise-hebrew/id704434205?i=1000483119449>.

**Commented [AH183]:** Language is a core part of cultural identity. Our language influences the way we think, act, and perceive the world. Language is constantly changing just as the world is constantly changing. New words are created and adopted. Old words are lost. Spoken language is more fluid than the language of literature, which often forms and preserves the foundation of culture in civilizations, such as the Quran of Islamic civilization, in addition to oral traditions such as music. Mixed languages generally form as result of contact between two or more linguistic groups, dictated by social interaction and hegemonic forces (cultural, economic, military, demographic, etc.).

The history of Semitic language morphology offers insights into how language is shaped by hegemony, contact, and survival, and reveals the adaptability of language and culture.

The Yiddish language, adapted by Ashkenazi Jews in the European Diaspora, combined German and Hebrew. The Sephardi Diaspora Jews in Spain and Northern Africa spoke Ladino, a fusion of Spanish, Hebrew and a mix of Iberian and other Middle Eastern languages. The Mizrahi Diaspora Jews developed Judeo-Arabic dialects across Iraq, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen. Aramaic, commonly known as the language of Jesus of Nazareth, is a Semitic language built from several Canaanite languages that spread broadly across the Middle East. The Aramaic alphabet was widely adopted for other languages including Hebrew and Arabic.

The revival of the Hebrew language took place between Europe and Palestine around the end of the 19th century, evolving from the language of Judaism to a spoken and written language later used for daily life in Israel. Modern Hebrew is the only known example of a language with no native speakers becoming the first language of millions of people. Hebrew and Arabic were the official languages of the state of Israel when it was founded in 1948 until in July 2018, the Jewish Nation-State Law made Hebrew the sole official language of the state of Israel, giving Arabic a "special status". Approximately 28.6% of Israelis speak Arabic comprised of approximately 20% Arab-Israelis whose mother-tongue is Arabic, and roughly 8.6% Israeli-Jews with varying familiarities of Arabic including Modern Standard Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, and the Palestinian Dialect. Cross-cultural language acquisition has been on the rise since 2015. . . .

There has always been extensive contact between Hebrew and Arabic. During the height of Islamic civilization in the Middle Ages, Jewish scholars translated many Arabic writings into Hebrew but there were many new science and philosophy concepts that couldn't be expressed using existing Hebrew vocabulary so new Hebrew words were created using the roots and patterns of Arabic. This ... [22]

**Commented [AH184]:** If including section in above comments, consider adding more about the history of Arabic morphology for both balance and because it's really interesting

Hebrew and Arabic, linguistic cousins, share more than 30% in common.<sup>422</sup> The language used in OBP productions addressing the Palestine-Israel issue would employ Hebrew-Arabic cognates as well as common words and phrases, as much as realistically and artistically possible to stimulate the learning of the “other’s” language for the stakeholder audience. Additionally, Hebrew and Arabic dubbing with multiple subtitles offers an engaging form of language learning. Bilingual schools and cross-cultural language programs would be included in the coalition of diverse non-profits supported by Olive Branch Pictures’ profit funnel.

### Social Impact

Olive Branch Pictures’ social impact goals are:

1. Mediate long-term hatred and violence, improve mutual understanding, build trust.
2. Counteract biased media and propaganda.
3. Promote shared morals and values
4. Provide high quality, entertaining educational content
5. UN Sustainable Development Goal #16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
6. Regional Economic Development: Providing jobs and training

### Social Impact Metrics

<sup>422</sup> Thomas Clausen. “Arabic VS Hebrew – How Similar Are The Two Semitic Languages?”. *AutoLingual* (2020): <https://autolingual.com/Arabic-vs-hebrew/>

**Commented [AH185]:** Hamas supports Hebrew programs to “learn the language of the enemy”. Many teenage Israelis learn Arabic to get admitted to the top intelligence units in the Israeli Defense force. Some Gazans still remember the Hebrew they picked up interacting with Israelis before the “Operation Protective Edge”, when the IDF withdrew 21 Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip, and Hamas was voted into power. Many Palestinians learn Hebrew to gain employment in the Israeli economy and to translate the Israeli media. Despite everything, there are still many Jews and Arabs who learn the others’ language primarily to connect with their neighbors and learn about their culture. Bilingual Arabic-Hebrew education presents a path for future of shared-society and shared language and their community is growing. However, they are not without their share of challenges. In 2014, the Jerusalem Hand in Hand School was vandalized by members of *Lehava*, a radical anti-assimilation group. Among Muslims, Christians and Druze, roughly 1% of married or cohabitating adults say their spouse has a different religion (or no religion), and approximately 2% of Jews report that their partner is not Jewish. According to a survey of over 2,100 residents from seven mixed Arab-Israeli cities, conducted by the Abraham Initiatives, 31% of Jews and 22% of Arabs stated that they try to avoid contact with the other group.

**Commented [AH186]:** This could also potentially play a role, however small, in bringing about the formation of a common public dialect over the course of generations in the land and the broader region in which frequent commercial and social contact is established.

**Commented [AH187]:** [Deleted]: Multi-culturalism and conservatism do not have to be mutually exclusive. A fine line of balance between assimilation and integration can be achieved through cooperation, cultural competition, research-based policy and management, and open negotiation.

Recognizing the difficulty in measuring the social impact of media and people-to-people peacebuilding, Olive Branch Pictures is committed to applying best practices and tools in survey data collection and impact evaluation in coordination with local surveyors and media influence measurement organizations such as the Palestinian Center for Policy & Survey Research, Harmony Labs, and Arab Barometer, evaluating key social impact indicators including:

- # Stakeholder readers/viewers
- Testimonials/Anecdotal Evidence
- Longitudinal Focus Group Studies
- Public Opinion + Critical Reviews
- Survey data of changes in audience attitude & behavior
- Changes in policy & resource allocation
- # Jobs + Training for underprivileged stakeholders
- Artistic Quality recognition awards i.e. Annie Awards, Annecy, etc.
- Amount of funds raised for ideologically diverse non-profit partners

Based on frameworks including

- "Faith Matters: A Guide for the Design, Monitoring & Evaluation of Inter-Religious Action for Peacebuilding" by Peter Woodrow, Nick Oatley & Michelle Garred
- Ian Thomas's "Building an Impact Evaluation Toolbox based on an Arts and Soft Power Ecosystem"

- The Participant Index from Participant Media, a media-impact research system from Participant Media that mines social media conversations and audience opinion data to determine audience reactions to film, TV, and video content.

### Scale

The comics medium enables low-cost minimum viable products, which can then be scaled to animation and educational games, adapting to stakeholder audience feedback and changing socio-political landscapes, partnering with international, regional, and local production and distribution companies, to reach massive audiences, including stakeholders.

Olive Branch Pictures envisions applying this methodology to counteract rising general trends in mis-and-disinformation as well as other social conflicts all over the world such as India-Pakistan, Uyghurs in China, political polarization, and ethnic prejudice.

### Conclusion

Narratives are the stories that define our identities, individually and collectively. Stories are sequences of events that communicate the human experience. Stories capture social realism and idealism. Humans need ideals to strive for. Myths are stories of civilizations. We create heroes that reflect our ideals and tell stories to shape the values of our people. The history of cartoons and graphic literature, specifically in the Middle East, demonstrates cartoons as effective vehicles of communication and their potential for conflict mediation. While it is

**Commented [188]:** Address how focusing on intractable conflicts can work as a model. Increase awareness and mobilize productive support of an international audience. Recognizing that there are those industries such as media and warfare technology profit from conflict and can intentionally or unintentionally perpetuate it.

Counter-argument: what about the people who just want to escape? Who don't want to be mobilized into a grassroots advocacy network?  
 → Answer: Hopefully Olive Branch Pictures productions will be so entertaining and the idea that part of their ticket money is going to help people is enough to make them feel good and just enjoy the story and for those who are willing to do more, we can pull them in

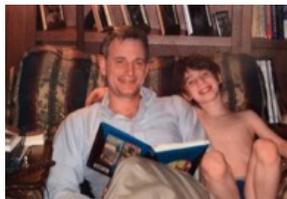
**Commented [AH189]:** Maybe condense into one sentence or take out.

practically impossible to separate the perspective of the storyteller from the story, it is possible to synthesize diverse perspectives from multiple storytellers. This will not be easy. It will require courage, creativity, open-mindedness, empathy, a diverse and talented team, perseverance, and collective, grassroots effort. But I believe it can and should be done.



Andy Hirsh is the Founder of [Olive Branch Pictures, Inc.](#) He was the 2020 Luff Peace Fellow at the [Watson Institute](#) and a 2021 [50:50 Startups](#) Fellow. Andy completed his BA in Political Science at Wesleyan University. He is pursuing a dual Social Impact MBA and MA in Conflict Resolution and Coexistence at Brandeis University and studying Jewish Law,

Ethics, and Philosophy at the Heiden Institute: *Machon Shlomo* in Jerusalem. “Shira and Amal” and Olive Branch Pictures were first inspired in July 2017 in culmination of Andy’s volunteer experiences in the Middle East, Mexico, and India, his Jewish roots and curiosity for all dharmas, falling in love with a peacenik in Tel Aviv, a passion for media, storytelling, diplomacy, language, and entrepreneurship, and a need to reclaim his creativity. Andy has always loved cartoons since he was a kid. He fondly remembers reading original superhero comics with his Dad and waking up early for Saturday morning cartoons.



@: [andy.hirsh@watson.is](mailto:andy.hirsh@watson.is) 🌐: [olivebranchpictures.org](http://olivebranchpictures.org)

Add The history of animation begins with the flickering light from fire on cave drawings. Then Plato's allegory of the Cave".

Imprisonment in the cave[edit]

Plato begins by having

Socrates ask Glaucon to imagine a cave where people have been imprisoned from childhood, but not from birth. These prisoners are chained so that their legs and necks are fixed, forcing them to gaze at the wall in front of them and not to look around at the cave, each other, or themselves (514a–b).[2] Behind the prisoners is a fire, and between the fire and the prisoners is a raised walkway with a low wall, behind which people walk carrying objects or puppets "of men and other living things" (514b).[2]The people walk behind the wall so their bodies do not cast shadows for the prisoners to see, but the objects they carry do ("just as puppet showmen have screens in front of them at which they work their puppets" (514a)[2]). The prisoners cannot see any of what is happening behind them, they are only able to see the shadows cast upon the cave wall in front of them. The sounds of the people talking echo off the walls, and the prisoners believe these sounds come from the shadows (514c).[2]

Socrates suggests that the shadows are reality for the prisoners because they have never seen anything else; they do not realize that what they see are shadows of objects in front of a fire, much less that these objects are inspired by real things outside the cave which they do not see (514b–515a).[2]

The fire, or human-made light, and the puppets, used to make shadows, are done by the artists. Plato, however, indicates that the fire is also the political doctrine that is taught in a nation state. The artists use light and shadows to teach the dominant doctrines of a time and place.

Also, few humans will ever escape the cave. This is not some easy task, and only a true philosopher, with decades of preparation, would be able to leave the cave, up the steep incline. Most humans will live at the bottom of the cave, and a small few will be the major artists that project the shadows with the use of human-made light.

Departure from the cave[edit]

Plato then supposes that one prisoner is freed. This prisoner would look around and see the fire. The light would hurt his eyes and make it difficult for him to see the objects casting the shadows. If he were told that what he is seeing is real instead of the other version of reality he sees on the wall, he would not believe it. In his pain, Plato continues, the freed prisoner would turn away and run back to what he is accustomed to (that is, the shadows of the carried objects). He writes "... it would hurt his eyes, and he would escape by turning away to the things which he was able to look at, and these he would believe to be clearer than what was being shown to him." [2]

Plato continues: "Suppose... that someone should drag him... by force, up the rough ascent, the steep way up, and never stop until he could drag him out into the light of the sun." [2] The prisoner would be angry and in pain, and this would only worsen when the radiant light of the sun overwhelms his eyes and blinds him. [2]

"Slowly, his eyes adjust to the light of the sun. First he can see only shadows. Gradually he can see the reflections of people and things in water and then later see the people and things themselves. Eventually, he is able to look at the stars and moon at night until finally he can look upon the sun itself (516a)." [2] Only after he can look straight at the sun "is he able to reason about it" and what it is (516b). [2] (See also Plato's analogy of the sun, which occurs near the end of The Republic, Book VI. [3][4])

Return to the cave[edit]

Plato continues, saying that the freed prisoner would think that the world outside the cave was superior to the world he experienced in the cave and attempt to share this with the prisoners

remaining in the cave attempting to bring them onto the journey he had just endured; "he would bless himself for the change, and pity [the other prisoners]" and would want to bring his fellow cave dwe

Page 46: [2] Commented [AH26] Andrew Hirsh 2/7/22 4:24:00 PM

Maybe add:



## Adel Tartir

Palestine

Theatrical artist, storyteller and owner of "Sandouq El-Ajab" (The Wonder Box), Adel Tartir, is one of the most important pioneers and founders of the contemporary theatrical movement in Palestine in his work in theatre for nearly half a century. He was one of the founders of the theatrical Group "Balaleen" (1970) and Sandouq El-Ajab Theatrical Group (1975). In the early nineties, Tartir used the heritage 'Peep Box' (Wonder Box) and the storyteller 'Abu al-Ajab' in his theatrical works. Tartir has participated in several local, Arab and international festivals, events and workshops. Furthermore, Abu Al-Ajab continues to wander with his stories to become an integrated theatrical form that is not limited to folk tales, but extends to addressing many different topics and issues.

<http://museum.arabpuppettheatre.org/index.php/bands/band-info/?id=recu3f77xJAK1AWDg>

Page 48: [3] Commented [AH27] Andrew Hirsh 11/15/21 10:45:00 PM

Add:

Nidal Khatib started his journey in a prison cell. Back in 1982, Khatib was put in an Israeli jail for six months for distributing posters during Land Day. There he met his fellow detainees, who became part of the “theatre” they all created. They turned the cell into a stage and used the tools available to them as props. This was the starting point for Khatib that led him to become an exquisite puppeteer.



Nidal Khatib

Khatib was fascinated mostly by the idea of “changing roles.” Through the stage, he found a medium for self-expression.

Upon his release from prison, Khatib decided to go further with theatre. He joined [the Hakawati Theatre](#) in Jerusalem and found himself especially attracted to comedy: “The theatre is a place where people can receive spiritual joy and, at the same time, it leaves them with a message,” Khatib explains. The first play he performed as a professional actor was *Slaves Go West*, directed by Radi Shehadeh.

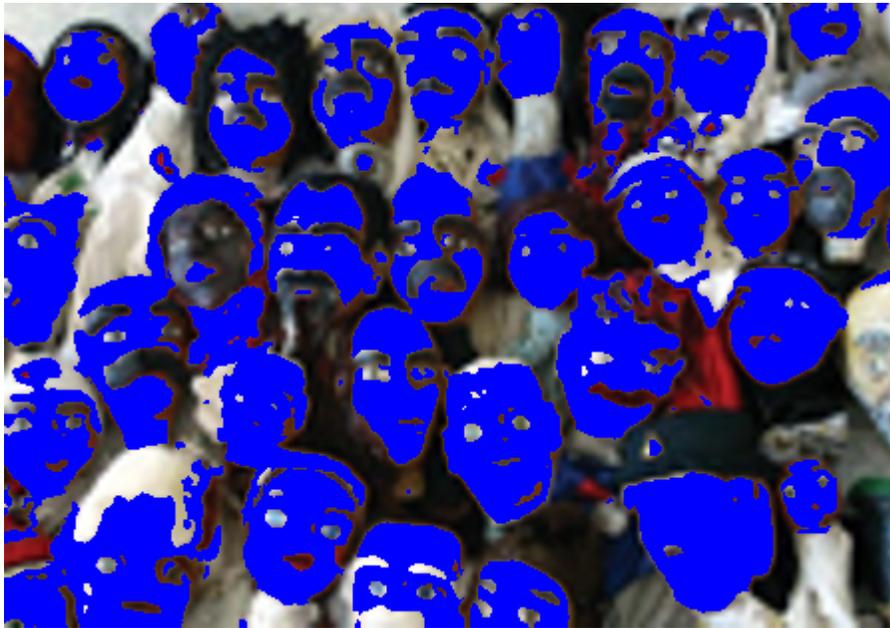


Then the first Intifada erupted in 1988, and Khatib was back in jail for another six months, this time in *Ansar-3*, an Israeli prison compound located in southern Palestine. He, once again, used his time in jail for a new production. *Ansar-3*, named after the prison compound, deals with surviving the prison cell, the challenges he faced, the dry desert, and the hardship of being disconnected from family. The play was then directed by Fateh Azzam and performed in various places in Palestine, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

Following the success of *Ansar 3*, Nidal pursued his theatre studies at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom and returned to Palestine in 1991 upon graduating. Khatib came back with a new spirit in mind and decided to dedicate his work to children’s theatre by establishing Tantoura puppet theatre. Khatib has an

entire family of puppets that extends from daughters of mothers to sons of army soldiers!

His decision to move from adult to children's theatre, specifically puppetry, emerged for many reasons. First and foremost is because Khatib has a passion to send a message of hope, peace, and love to Palestinian children. "Life in Palestine is full of pain," he explains, "but I want to be happy and defend the peace and love in the world, with myself and with the children." In addition, he enjoys working with puppets: "Each has a character," he says, "and a spiritual connection."



Khatib met his beloved Maysoun in February 2000, when a partnership began. Maysoun became an integral part of the puppet theatre and added the female voice and spirit to the work. Khatib believes in the importance of having a woman in this medium that for too long has been dominated by the male voice. They now work together as a family along with their four children: Mousa (10 years old) is the technical assistant; Maysam (8 years old) and Majdal Shams (6 years old) are costume designers, and Makram (5 years old) is the youngest Palestinian actor! The children are always present during shows, either as actors or behind the scenes.

They have almost 200 shows every year at schools and in villages, camps, cities, and various Palestinian communities.

The couple was awarded the Palestine Award for Excellence and Creativity in 2010.



Currently, the family is working in Shadow Theatre and just finished the production of *The Inferno of the Shadow*, now on tour in Palestine. The play addresses the issue of violence against women and their right to inheritance.

<http://www.puppetring.com/2012/07/13/nidal-khatib-a-palestinian-puppeteer/>

Page 83: [4] Commented [AH52] Andrew Hirsh 1/20/22 10:28:00 PM

Maybe add: Majid TV was established in 2015 under Abu Dhabi Media and seeks to engage children with home-grown productions and cartoon characters such as 'Majid' and 'Kasslan'.

"We have almost 15-20 original characters that have managed to sustain their weight over the years. Based on extensive research conducted directly with kids, we revamped Majid TV in February last year," Al Serkal explains. One of the Original shows titled *Jamool* (Camel) was launched during Ramadan this year. The series is Majid's first silent animated show. Separated from his mother at birth, Jamool, the camel, goes on adventures to discover who he is. In every episode, he meets a new animal and tries to imitate it, hoping to see whether he can finally discover his true species.

Unlike other Majid IPs that feature Emirati characters such as 'Amoona' or 'Fateen', *Jamool* is a show with no cultural specs.



'Jamool'

"*Jamool's* theme is universal. Anyone can enjoy the show because it is funny and relatable. We don't need to put Arabic elements in everything we make. That's not how you make kids want to watch it," says Al Serkal.

The platform's Youtube channel has 65m total views and 463m impressions.

<https://www.broadcastprome.com/case-studies/an-appetite-for-animation-in-the-uae/c>

Page 104: [5] Commented [58]

Andrew Hirsh

5/20/21 10:07:00 PM

Add:

Dear honored guests,

My name is Majda Shaheen, I am a Palestinian residing in a short strip of land called the Gaza Strip. As you all probably know, our current situation is exceedingly difficult in light of the last war we experienced. It is still unclear what the upcoming days will bring, but I hope with all my heart that we will succeed in obtaining true peace, so that my children and all the Palestinian people will be privileged to live a good and ordinary life.

It is a great honor to accept this wonderful award from the Cartoonists' Rights Network International. Unfortunately, I am not able to attend this ceremony or fly to the United States of America, a country that only in my sweetest dreams am I able to witness its wonders.

The importance of art in my life has nothing to compare, in its intensity. From the moment I first experienced the beauty of art my life was changed. It is not a simple matter for a woman like me to express my opinions with such clarity, particularly when these opinions don't coincide with those of the current rulers, The Hamas movement.

Cartoons are the instrument which I use to express myself as a person and to present my own

opinions and values as an independent person. On one hand, cartoons are a medium many identify with and accept, and through which people are exposed to new philosophies and schools of thought. On the other hand, many who have become entrenched with their own beliefs come into conflict with cartoonists, disregarding all other opinions which might threaten them. This has occurred to me on multiple occasions.

Despite all the obstacles and challenges put in my way, I still believe in the influence of art on society and culture, even when that influence might be undetected. It is essential for me to express myself as a woman and as a Palestinian living in Gaza, a place where opinions similar to mine are rarely heard and are not given the opportunity to be broadly communicated. Our political leaders willingly choose to ignore or silence voices that do not match their agenda. Revolutions begin from the simple people, who raise their voices to speak for themselves and represent the silent majority.

I want to thank whomever supported me and stood by me through the most difficult of times. A special thanks to Dr. Russell and members of the CRNI Board of Directors who have given me a place to express my opinions, helped me through most difficult moments, and have granted me this wonderful award. Let us hope that art will overcome all hardships and guide us towards a better and more just society.

Thank you very much, Majda Shaheen

\*\*\*SHE COULD BE THE ONE, BUT HER LIFE WAS THREATENED FOR HER WORK, IS SHE EVEN STILL ALIVE

<https://www.toonsmag.com/indian-palestinian-cartoonists-win-crnis-2014-courage-in-editorial-cartooning-award/>

\*To get in touch maybe reach out to Robert Russel, Founder of Cartoonists Rights Network

International [robertrussellstudio@gmail.com](mailto:robertrussellstudio@gmail.com)

<http://www.robertrussell.net/contact-test>

Page 104: [6] Commented [59] Andrew Hirsh 5/23/21 7:19:00 PM

Maybe add:

Ahmed Naji | ناجي، أحمد

Naji's graphic novel Using Life is about protagonist filmmaker Bassam Bahgat, who after being asked to create a documentary about urban planning and architecture in Cairo, discovers a network of underground conspiracies run by his employers.

Two years after the novel's 2014 release, a reader reported an extract of the text to the government for "harm[ing] public morality"; Naji was sentenced to two years in prison. While widespread international public support found Naji an early release, he was put on trial again in 2017 for similar charges (Johnston).

Naji's imprisonment demonstrates how controversial media can be weaponised

samirsamir

against its author when authorities disagree with controversial content. His support and early release, however, instead demonstrate the power of free speech, and how the public rally against threats of unfair persecution.

<https://arabcomixproject.weebly.com/censorship--persecution.html>

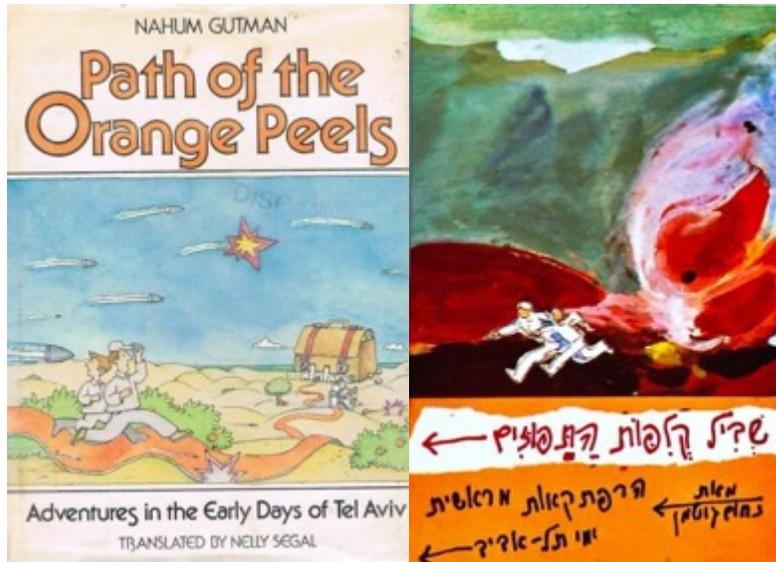
Page 104: [7] Commented [61] Andrew Hirsh 5/25/21 5:59:00 PM

Maybe add: Zehra Doğan (born April 14, 1989) is a Kurdish artist and journalist and author from Diyarbakır, Turkey. In 2017, she was sentenced to 2 years, 9 months and 22 days in prison for "terrorist propaganda" because of her news coverage, social media posts, and sharing a painting of hers on social media.[2] Her painting depicts the destruction of the Nusaybin, town in southeastern Turkey, after the clashes between state security forces and Kurdish insurgents. After she finished her sentence, she was released from imprisonment from Tarsus Prison on 24 February 2019.[3][4]

Nachum Gutman was born in Telenești, in modern Moldova. He was the fourth child of Rivka Simcha Alter Gutman, who was a Hebrew writer and educator who wrote under the pen name S. ben Zion. In 1903, the family moved to Odessa, and two years later, to Ottoman Palestine in Herzliya. In 1912, he studied at the Bezalel School in Jerusalem. In 1920–26, he studied art in Vienna, Berlin and Paris. Gutman helped pioneer a distinctively Israeli style in a variety of mediums, moving away from the European influences of his teachers. His sculptures and brightly colored mosaics can be seen in public places around Tel Aviv. Gutman's artistic style was eclectic, ranging from figurative to abstract. Gutman was also a well-known writer and illustrator of children's books. In 1935, Gutman published "In the land of Lubengolo King of Zulu" about his voyage to East Africa and the legendary King Lobengula of the Ndebele tribe.



In 1958 Gutman released a well-known Israeli children's book, "Path of Orange Peels", a story about a Jewish youth who becomes unwittingly involved in a dangerous and important mission during World War I as the British and Turks struggle for control of Palestine.



Page 138: [9] Commented [78] Andrew Hirsh 7/28/21 2:15:00 PM

Add "animator, director, professor, and journalist Tsvika Oren, who has produced more than 30 films initiator, including Mermaid SOS

Country-Israel

Year-2004

Director-Avi Ofer, Tsvika Oren

Awards

Official selection I Casteli Animati 2004, Genzano di Roma, Italy.

Asif 2004, Tel-Aviv. First prize for independent film

and co-founder of the Israeli chapter of ASIFA (Association Internationale du Film d'Animation) was honored at the Asif 2010 ceremony held on Friday, August 20, as part of the Animix festival at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque.

Asif 2010 – Israeli Animation

By

Ayelet Dekel

August 22, 2010

<https://www.midnighteast.com/mag/?p=6937>

Page 138: [10] Commented [79] Andrew Hirsh 7/28/21 2:03:00 PM

Maybe add:

Sipur Ahava סיפור אהבה  
year 1980  
country israel  
director Haim Callev  
Screenplay Yaffa Callev  
Producer Haim Callev  
Cinematographer Kobe Yoel  
composer Yaron Kafkafi  
assembly Yaffa Callev  
genre cartoon, short film  
time 30 min.

<http://israel-pozitiv.narod.ru/index/0-2>

Page 138: [11] Commented [80] Andrew Hirsh 7/28/21 2:04:00 PM

Maybe add:  
Swamp

year 1992  
country israel  
director Gil Alkabetz  
genre cartoon, short film  
time 11 min.  
Battle of two horse armies. Whose side will the advantage be?  
Awards  
Canada, Ottawa International Animation Festival Special Jury Prize  
Original idea October 1, 1992  
Original theatrical idea

Page 138: [12] Commented [81] Andrew Hirsh 7/28/21 2:00:00 PM

Maybe add:  
Lights the miracle of chanukah

year 1983  
country USA Israel  
genre cartoon short  
time 24 min.

Premiere - USA 1983  
<http://israel-pozitiv.narod.ru/index/0-2>

Page 138: [13] Commented [82] Andrew Hirsh 7/28/21 2:01:00 PM

Maybe add: בצבוץ BITZBUTZ

year 1984  
country israel  
directed by Gil Alcabets  
script by Gil Alcabets

genre cartoon short  
time 3 min.

A play of contrasts, a black monster and a white bird are trying to overcome each other.

## Awards

1984 Short Film Competition, Israel, Animation Award; 1985 Short Film Festival, Melbourne, Australia, Animation Award. 1985 Veyrier Animated Film Festival, Geneva, Switzerland  
<http://israel-pozitiv.narod.ru/index/0-2>

Page 138: [14] Commented [83] Andrew Hirsh 7/28/21 2:02:00 PM

Maybe add:

Tzav Kriya צב קריאה

year 1989

country israel

director Haim Callev

script by Yaffa Callev

producer Haim Callev

cameraman Kobe Yoel

assembly by Yaffa Cellev

genre cartoon short

time30 min

<http://israel-pozitiv.narod.ru/index/0-2>

Page 141: [15] Commented [84] Andrew Hirsh 7/28/21 2:11:00 PM

In the twenty-first century, Israeli animation is bursting with renewed vigor with many cartoons and a sea of awards. Israel is turning from a consumer of animation to a producer of animation!

The waitress

year 2000

Country - Israel

Director - Talya Lavie

Curtain No. 2

Country-Israel

Year 2000

Director-Oran Adler

Gershon

year 2001

country israel

directed by Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv

Screenplay by Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv

Producer Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv

Cinematographer Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv

composer Saar Bar Shalev

artist Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv

Editing: Shunit Aharoni, Oren Yaniv

genre cartoon, short film

time11 min.

Awards

Film Schools Festival, Mexico

Students Film Festival, Moscow

Fidéc - International Festival for Cinema Schools, Huy, Belgium

Festival of Short Films and New Images, Rome

Haifa International Film Festival - First Prize (short film)  
Hannover Film Festival Germany

Menashe and Nechama

Country-Israel

Year-2001

Director-Micha Amitai

Awards

Melbourne Students Festival, Australia, 2002

British Animation Awards, London, 2002

Haifa Film Festival, 2001

MK 22

Country-Israel

Year-2004

Genre

Animation

Sitcom

Created by

Yaron Niski

Doron Tzur

Assaf Harel

Ohad Elimelech

Written by

Yaron Niski

Doron Tzur

Assaf Harel

Directed by

Assaf haarel

Voices of

Danny Steg

Haim Barbalat

Albert Iluz

Inbal Luri

Adib Jahschan

Ending theme

"Tamid Ola HaMangina" by Pick Sisters

Country of origin

Israel

Language (s)

Hebrew

"MK-22" is rightly compared with the American animated series South Park, as well as with the Israeli comedy "Givat Halfon Does Not Answer" - about border guards in Sinai. It was invented by the comic book authors Yaron Niski and Doron Tzur, based on their own military experience, a politically incorrect and funny series about everyday life in the army. The heroes of the series - soldiers Hanukkah and Shulman - serve at a military base guarding the "Doomsday secret weapon." Their service is mainly reduced to watching TV programs and clashes with a dumb warrant officer. Other heroes "MK-22" - a Bedouin terrorist and his herd of

shahid sheep, volunteer Michal in a wheelchair, an Ethiopian guard and a dozen celebrities (from Shimon Peres to Hasan Nasrallah). All are drawn in a square style (even the sun and the pacifist sign in the series are square), which, on the one hand, reflects the essence of the army, on the other hand, it gives originality to the images.

Awards

Israel Television Academy Prize, Best Comedy Series 2004

<http://israel-pozitiv.narod.ru/index/0-2>

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Maybe add:



Page 147: [17] Commented [91] Andrew Hirsh 7/21/21 9:34:00 PM

Maybe add that there aren't any Universities in Palestine that offered courses in comics and animation and with money tight in Palestine, architecture was a more practical path for those with artistic inclinations towards cartoons and animation such as

Shomali

Khalil Abu Arafah is a Palestinian cartoonist, in favour of peaceful resistance. He was born in Jerusalem in 1957.

He studied architecture in Kiev (Ukraine) and he currently pursues a double career of architect

and designer. His editorial cartoons are published in the daily newspaper Al Quds (based in East Jerusalem) since 1994.

Khalil is also a writer and he published several illustrated books for children. He was also the first head writer of the Palestinian version of the TV show "Sesame Street". In 1996, Khalil received the Ghassan Kanafani Award for excellence as a cartoonist.

Both the Palestinian Hamas and the Israeli government are not pleased with his political activism which led him to spend a total of fourteen months in Israeli prisons between 1986 and 1992.

<https://www.cartooningforpeace.org/en/dessinateurs/khalil/>

Add Samir Harb

Born 1981 in Ramallah/Palestinian territories.

Samir Harb graduated from Department of Architectural Engineering at Birzeit University in Ramallah in 2006. He finished his studies in 2011 with a master's degree in arts at Goldsmiths College in London/United Kingdom. He is an architect/cartoonist and has been working in the field of architecture and landscape planning in the West Bank since 2006.

He attempts to mix between cartoons and his architecture research which explore and criticize the processes of territorial transformation in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). Moreover he investigates the limits of architectural elements on the continuity of landscape in Palestine and translates the research into installations and drawings. He carried out several exhibitions in Rome/Italy, Ravenna/Italy, Oslo/Norway, and Amman/Jordan.

Harb's project focuses on the idea to re-construct the meta-narrative in complex spatial orders. While architecture serves as the body of research in which the territorial, spatial networks, economical and political transformations are saturated. The graphic novel acts as a practice of reordering and shifting between things, events, dialogs, accounts, and archival material. His exhibitions represented a series of a strong graphic form, including maps, historical events, and main figures shaping the spatial order in the region. He took part in the Decolonizing Architecture (2010) with The Red Castle and The Lawless Line at 0047 in Oslo and We Have Woven the Motherlands with Nets of Iron (2011) in cooperation with Dr. Nicola Perogini at Giza Train Station in Amman.

He received the Granted Humanitarian Scholarship from Goldsmiths College in 2011 and the Melina Mercouri International Prize for protection and management of cultural landscape of the West Bank for the group project Battir cultural and natural landscape management plan 2011.

Comic: <http://www.decolonizing.ps/site/battir-2/>

The Red Castle and the Lawless Line: A legal-architectural fable of extraterritorial transformation

os

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Maybe add:

Lamia Ziadé's *O Nuit O Mes Yeux*.

This gorgeous graphic novel, by the tremendously gifted Ziadé (also the author of the Lebanese Civil War memoir *Bye Bye Babylon*, tr. Olivia Snaije), was featured in Bulaq Episode 18. *Ô Nuit Ô Mes Yeux* is a stylish, charming illustrated text about the larger-than-life lives of Arab musicians. An excerpt titled "Fairouz in my Grandfather's Shop," translated into English by Edward Gauvin, appears in the July 2018 *Words Without Borders*.

Rawand Issa's *Not from Mars*

This intense, poetic, and personal graphic novel from Lebanese artist Rawand Issa explores life, love, and what it means to be a woman. Although this is not in translation, if you buy the edition from Maamoul press, it comes with an "English translation sheet."

Maamoul also has a bilingual edition of Issa's *The Insubordinate* in a "do-si-do fold."

Soumeya Ouarezki and Mahmoud Benamar's Fatma N'parapli

The opening of a book series written in Algerian Arabic, which centers on two mysterious women who live in an old house covered with umbrellas and become object of fear and fascination. The first is an old woman who can predict the future and prescribe remedies, while the second is smartly dressed, collects umbrellas, speaks French, and lives selling vegetables in the neighborhood, evading the boundaries set up around her.

Translated to French by Lotfi Nia.

TO CONTRIBUTE & ANTICIPATE: Jewelry Box

Because of the political climate in Egypt, the Egyptian women's graphic-novel collective Jewelry Box (الشكجية) ceased publishing their magazine.

But now the Beirut-based Knowledge Workshop has partnered with Jewelry Box creators to put together a new issue, which promises to explore love from a feminist perspective.

<https://arablit.org/2019/08/13/in-for-translation-7-graphic-novels-by-arab-women/>

Page 155: [19] Commented [97] Andrew Hirsh 9/17/21 4:12:00 PM

Maybe add some of these:

Baraitser, Marion and Anna Evans. Home Number One: A Graphic Novel. Loki Books, 2006.

Dinah, a bored Jewish girl living in the repressed city of Utopia in the imagined America of 2020, is sent on a life-changing journey to 1943, where she joins her distant cousin Gonda and two friends in Theresienstadt. This graphic novel offers a unique way for teen readers to explore the Holocaust.

Burstein, Chaya. The Kids' Cartoon Bible. Jewish Publication Society of America, 2002. Using a comic book style format, Burstein offers familiar Bible stories in an easy and accessible format for children ages 9 and up.

Gunderson, Jessica. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (Graphic Library). Capstone Press, 2006. With easy-to-read text and large, brightly-colored illustrations, this exciting retelling of the Triangle fire provides a good introduction to the topic for readers ages 8- 10.

Hudson-Goff, Elizabeth and Jonatha A. Brown. Anne Frank (Graphic Biographies). World Almanac Library, 2006. The well-known story of Anne Frank is given a new twist as a graphic novel. Because of the subject matter and some disturbing images of concentration camp victims, this book is recommended for ages 10-12.

Kubert, Joe. The Adventures of Yaacov & Isaac. Mahrwood Press (distributed in the U.S. by Feldheim Publishers), 2004. Kubert's stories about two young brothers impart Torah values and Jewish history lessons in an exciting action-adventure comic book style that is likely to appeal to elementary school boys ages 10 and up.

Mahr, Aryeh. Shmuel Ha Nagid: a Tale of the Golden Age. Mahrwood Press, 2005. The life of Shmuel Ha Nagid, a Talmudic scholar, statesman, and warrior, is told in a vibrantly-illustrated style, and is most suitable for an Orthodox audience ages 9-12.

Lutes, Jason and Nick Bertozzi. Houdini: The Handcuff King. Hyperion, 2007. This snapshot of one day in the life of the famous showman offers an edge-of-your-seat reading experience for children ages 10 and up.

Moscowitz, Moshe. Miracle Lights: The Chanukah Story. Shazak Productions, 2004. Benny learns the story of Chanukah from his grandfather in this "animated" book, suitable for children

as young as 6.

Moscowitz, Moshe. *Out of Egypt*. Shazak Productions/Feldheim, 2007. Shazak Productions newest book focuses on the story of Exodus. Some scary images make this book more appropriate for children 10 and up.

Moscowitz, Moshe. *The Queen of Persia: An Illustrated Adaptation of an Ancient Story*. Shazak Productions, 2003. Bold cartoon-style illustrations retell the story of Queen Esther. Since this version is somewhat irreverent, it may be more suitable for children older than 12.

Pollack, Gadi. *Once Upon a Tale: Twelve Illustrated Parables from the Dubno Maggid*. Feldheim Publishers, 2004. This beautifully-illustrated book offers parables and lessons from the Torah for children ages 10 and up.

Sheinkin, Steve. *The Adventures of Rabbi Harvey: A Graphic Novel of Jewish Wisdom and Wit in the Wild West*. Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006. These ten gems about Rabbi Harvey are told in the manner of classic Jewish folktales and are illustrated in a sepia-toned graphic novel format. The humor is aimed at teens and adults.

Sturm, James. *The Golem's Mighty Swing*. Drawn and Quarterly, 2003. This graphic novel follows a Jewish baseball team as they travel through the Midwest in the 1920's. Beset with a losing record, they conjure a golem to help draw the crowds, but instead face fierce anti-Semitism. This novel is a good choice for teenage boys.

Graphic Novels for Older Teens and Adults

Croci, Pascal. *Auschwitz*. Harry N. Abrams, 2003. This intense graphic novel depicts an elderly couple as they recall their experiences and heartbreaking losses in Auschwitz. Because of the disturbing nature of the images and text, this book is most suitable for adults.

Eisenstein, Bernice. *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*. Riverhead Books, 2006. In part a graphic novel and in part a memoir, Eisenstein's book is a unique and, at times, humorous look at a sober topic.

Ei

Page 179: [20] Commented [119] Andrew Hirsh 9/18/21 9:24:00 PM

Maybe add the Anne Frank animated feature film was first made in 1998

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAIRFyR6NyQ&ab\\_channel=AnneFrank%27sDiary-FeatureAnimatedFilm](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAIRFyR6NyQ&ab_channel=AnneFrank%27sDiary-FeatureAnimatedFilm)

Awarded the Children's Jury Award at the Chicago International Children's Festival. « The Film has moved me and I want to congratulate you for the high standard and sensibility in producing this film. I am sure it will be successful not only with the young audiences, but also for the elder generations. » Buddy ELIAS, President, ANNE FRANK FONDS, 1998 A LETTER BY Simon WIESENTHAL I have now viewed the English version of your film based on the Diary of Anne frank. Thank you for sending me the tape. I must admit that at first had my doubts whether an animated film could do justice to Anne Frank's Diary. I was therefore pleasantly surprised upon viewing it that the film doesn't trivialize the story of Anne Frank and makes for exciting viewing. This depiction of the growing up of a vivacious young girl in very difficult and extremely threatening surroundings will touch the hearts of young viewers--and will hopefully lead them to be wary of all signs of collective hatred, racism and anti-Semitism. It is good that with such well-done animated film more young people can be reached than would be the case with the book alone. With best regards, Sincerely, Simon WIESENTHAL "No previous adaptations of Anne Frank's Diary have done so with the imagination and sensitivity that characterize the animated film ANNE FRANK'S DIARY. The attendant music manages to be both unobstructive and haunting at the same time. This inspiring and poignant film is a remarkable tribute to Anne Frank." -Carol Ann Lee (Historian, author of 'Anne Frank: A biography') "...The highly realistic animation offers suspenseful touches and unusual points of view, and the music by Carine Gutlerner is excellent: spare and evocative." -Reader, Chicago " An animated version of Anne

Frank's famous diaries that makes her story easily accessible for a new generation without losing the power of the original text.(...) Most moving is Anne's internal life, her reaction to their persecution, and subsequent life of total isolation, silence, terror and ultimately the positive and humanitarian attitude she is able to maintain. Complemented by cutting edge animation, the film's most significant success is its ability to use the diary entries to create an Anne Frank who is compelling and endearing without being maudlin. " Yoshua Ford, Washington Film Festival " Animated "ANNE FRANK" retells story superbly". The movie is an achievement on several levels. Its aesthetic scheme is simple and unadorned enough to remind us that is a story of ordinary people thrust in into extraordinary circumstances, yet it's also gorgeous enough to carry us through its feature length. Its slab of colors and simple but inviting composition suggest paintings of Edward Hopper." Betsy Sherman, BOSTON GLOBE "This animated feature will undoubtedly remain the most beautiful adaptation of the most widely read work in the world. The city of Amsterdam is depicted very realistically sometimes making viewers think they are really there. The violin music moves our souls with its nostalgic air. The constantly latent emotion grows within us. Like the Diary, the movie ends when the attic occupants are arrested and the few lines that appear thereafter bring tears to our eyes and make us say: "Never again!". " YAHOO FRANCE "By adapting the Diary of Anne Frank in animated form, you have proven your great talent for teaching by successfully producing strong and moving animated images. I am convinced your movie will not only contribute to making the Diary of Anne Frank better known but it will also spur the awareness of young people and adults, and send a universal message of respect for human beings." EUROPEAN JEWISH CONGRESS "The animation is superb, the settings exquisite. It is true to life. The director documented his research, worked on the basis of photographs. It is a true setting of the time. It made me want to go to Amsterdam. The tone



- Add:

Omar Adnan Al Abdallat Cartoonist/Speaker/Producer Born in England 24/11/1978  
 Holds both Jordanian and British citizenship professional cartoonist since 2008  
 Worked in creative production and was a driver of creativity in many renowned companies, such as; Rubicon, Abu Mahjoob, Kharabeesh  
 An active member of Cartoon Movement and Tomato Cartoons. Created several characters that became national symbols and are associated with Jordanians and youth, such as, Awad Abu Shiffah, Abu Samra, Al Sheikh Khafash, Al Zaeem  
 Published over 2000 cartoons and 500 videos.  
 Co-authored and co-produced several online shows such as Mone3a Fil Seen (Banned from China), a satirical Jordanian show starring Ahmad Hasan Al Zubi.  
 Created and supervise a regionally acclaimed Youtube channel and its characters (3ala

Rasi) that is ranked 8th in popularity regionally according to Forbes and has been awarded the silver award by Youtube

Active on social media platforms and has over 100,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Motivational and inspirational speaker who participated in many local, regional and international events, such as but not limited to TEDX Oporto in Portugal in 2015, Al Doha 8th convention held by Al Jazeera in 2014

Held several key exhibitions for his work in Jordan and abroad, amongst the organizers were, Jordanian Women Association, Jordanian Royal Court where he exhibited his works in front of HM King Abdullah II, also in Cairo Egypt and Jordanian governorates Advocate of women's and youth's rights and has been selected as a Jordanian icon in the campaign against violence against women by USAID, United Nations and Dutch Embassy.

Trained and held many workshops on creative production, caricature, out-of-the-box thinking, drawing, social media engagement, tolerance and human rights and expression, amongst which were Jordanian Women Association workshops that were held across Jordanian governorates

Won many awards for his work in cartoon and social media presence, such as the Youtube silver award for "3ala Rasi", Arab Spring from "This is Amesterdam", Holland, and Naji Al Ali Award from Turkey

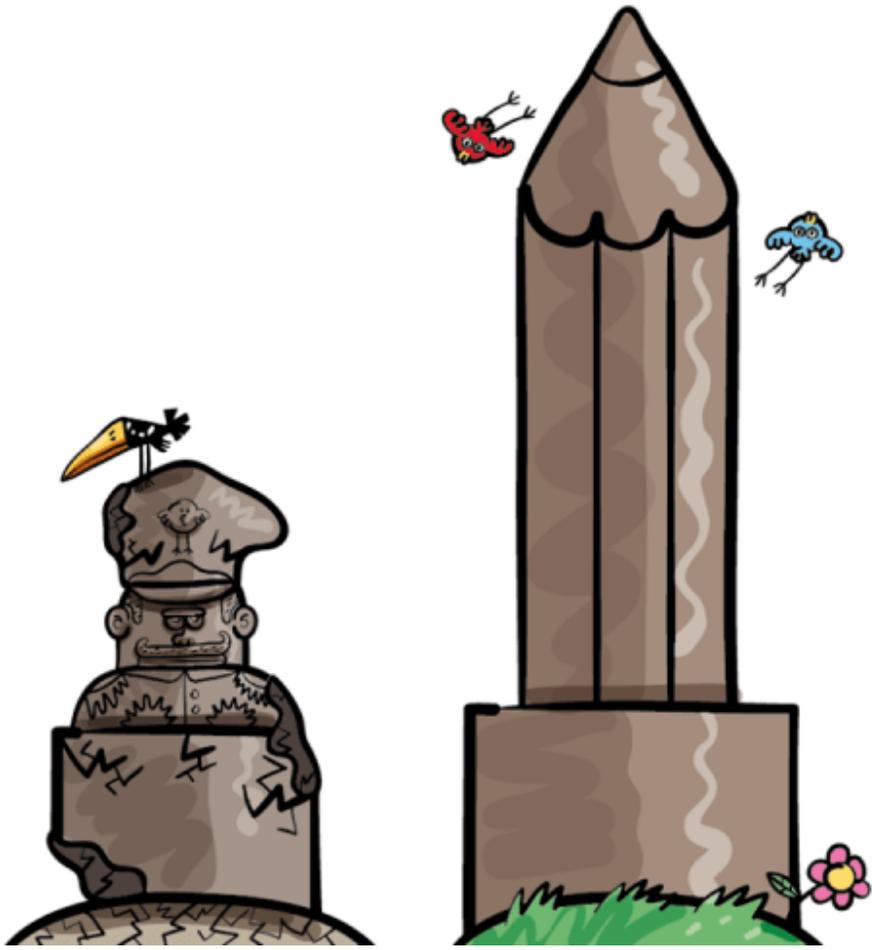
Co-founder and partner in several creative initiatives and companies, such as Free Pen for Creative Production, Tomato Cartoon, and Kharabeesh

[vsw id="cNmsGKYzHG0" source="youtube" width="720" height="480" autoplay="no"]

WE ARE  
THE WORLD  
WE ARE  
THE CHILDREN



Small





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Language is a core part of cultural identity. Our language influences the way we think, act, and perceive the world. Language is constantly changing just as the world is constantly changing. New words are created and adopted. Old words are lost. Spoken language is more fluid than the language of literature, which often forms and preserves the foundation of culture in civilizations, such as the Quran of Islamic civilization, in addition to oral traditions such as music. Mixed languages generally form as result of contact between two or more linguistic groups, dictated by social interaction and hegemonic forces (cultural, economic, military, demographic, etc.).

The history of Semitic language morphology offers insights into how language is shaped by hegemony, contact, and survival, and reveals the adaptability of language and culture.

The Yiddish language, adapted by Ashkenazi Jews in the European Diaspora, combined German and Hebrew. The Sephardi Diaspora Jews in Spain and Northern Africa spoke Ladino, a fusion of Spanish, Hebrew and a mix of Iberian and other Middle Eastern languages. The Mizrahi Diaspora Jews developed Judeo-Arabic dialects across Iraq, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen. Aramaic, commonly known as the language of Jesus of Nazareth, is a Semitic language built from several Canaanite languages that spread broadly across the Middle East. The Aramaic alphabet was widely adopted for other languages including Hebrew and Arabic.

The revival of the Hebrew language took place between Europe and Palestine around the end of the 19th century, evolving from the language of Judaism to a spoken and written language later used for daily life in Israel. Modern Hebrew is the only known example of a language with no native speakers becoming the first language of millions of people. Hebrew and Arabic were the official languages of the state of Israel when it was founded in 1948 until in July 2018, the Jewish Nation-State Law made Hebrew the sole official language of the state of Israel, giving Arabic

a "special status". Approximately 28.6% of Israelis speak Arabic comprised of approximately 20% Arab-Israelis whose mother-tongue is Arabic, and roughly 8.6% Israeli-Jews with varying familiarities of Arabic including Modern Standard Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, and the Palestinian Dialect. Cross-cultural language acquisition has been on the rise since 2015. , , ,

There has always been extensive contact between Hebrew and Arabic. During the height of Islamic civilization in the Middle Ages, Jewish scholars translated many Arabic writings into Hebrew but there were many new science and philosophy concepts that couldn't be expressed using existing Hebrew vocabulary so new Hebrew words were created using the roots and patterns of Arabic. This phenomenon of using the Semitic Arabic connection to formulate new Hebrew words happened again when modern Hebrew was revived by Eliezer ben Yehuda to create new Hebrew words to describe all of the new words of the 20th century. Arab supplies approximately 27% of the words modern Hebrew has borrowed from other languages, which is a lot considering the many foreign influences on the modern Hebrew language.

Already where Arabs and Israelis live together, Arabic words are commonly adopted by Israelis and Hebrew words by Arabs. Examples of the Israeli adoption include "yalla" meaning "Let's go", "ahlan" from Arabic meaning "welcome" and "akhla" meaning great, amazing in Hebrew from the same word in Arabic meaning "better".

Examples of Palestinian adoption of Hebrew include "ramzor" meaning "traffic light", the word "mianyen" meaning "interesting", and "kef" meaning "fun" because no Arabic equivalent exists or only exists in Modern Standard Arabic, sometimes too formal or a mouthful to say. There is also the Arab-Israeli combination of the word Arabic word "yanni" – "it means" and the Hebrew word "kilu" —"like"— to form the Arabic-Hebrew word "yanu".

Words like "makhsom", Hebrew for "checkpoint", have found their way into the Palestinian lexicon as well, for obvious reasons. Hebrew and Arabs shared hundreds of 3-letter roots, words, and idioms as well as hundreds of words borrowed from English and other world languages. Perhaps, generations from now, a future of peace in the region involves the gradual fusion of Hebrew, Arabic and English, into a common mixed dialect, while still of course preserving Israeli Hebrew and Palestinian Arabic.